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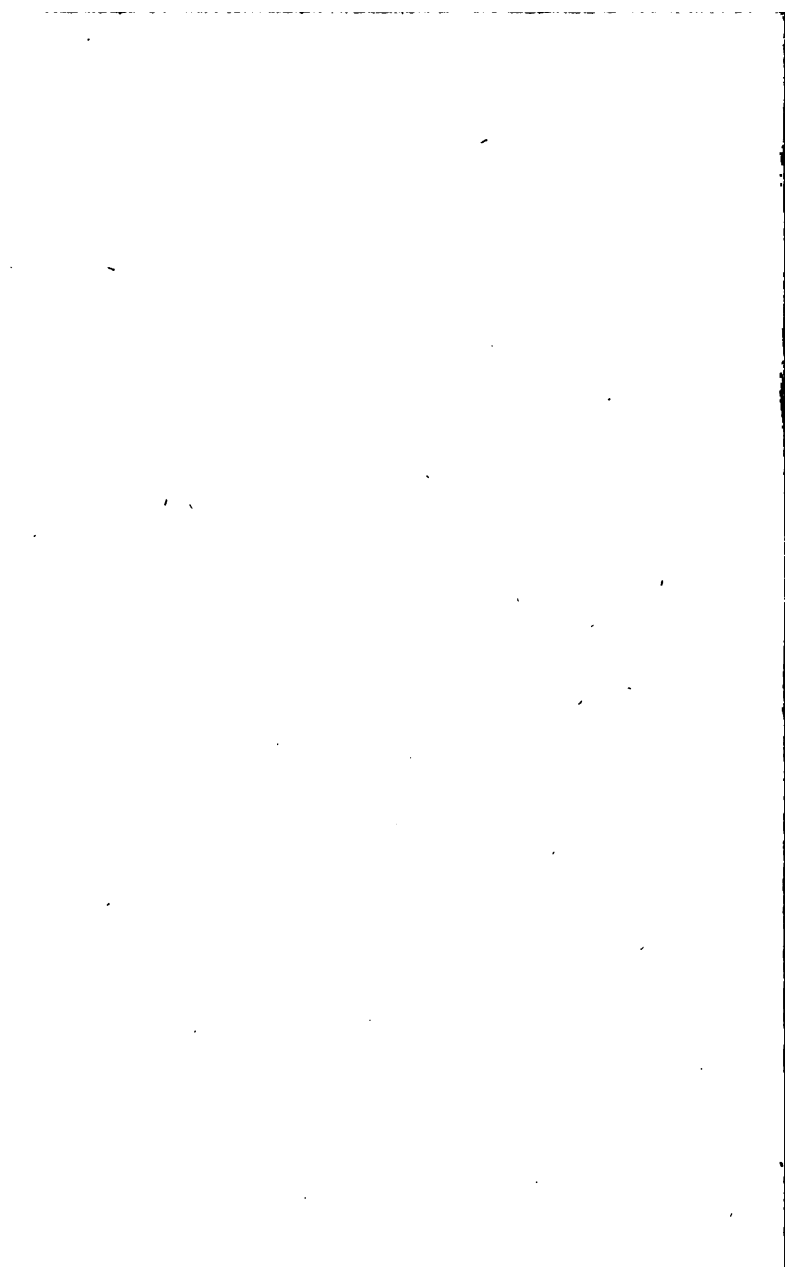
FACTS IN A CLERGYMAN'S LIFE.

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FACTS IN A CLERGYMAN'S LIFE:

BY THE

REV. CHARLES B. TAYLER, A.M.

RECTOR OF OTLEY, SUFFOLK.



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FLEET STREET, AND HANOVER STREET.

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FACTS IN A CLERGYMAN'S LIFE.

TO THE
REV. HENRY RAIKES, M A
CHANCELLOR OF THE DIOCESE OF CHESTER.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

There are few, I do not think there can be any, of those who are blessed with your friendship, that can prize it so truly as I do. I thank God with an especial gratitude, for the ten years I passed in almost daily intercourse with you—for your counsel, for your affection, and above all, for the benefit of your consistent and admirable example. I cannot look back on that time without a heavy heart, because it is gone, and on earth that daily intercourse is over ; but the retrospect of those happy days cheers me during my present warfare in this corrupt world, in the midst of

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FACTS IN A CLERGYMAN'S LIFE.

MINISTERIAL ORDINATION—THE OUTWARD CHANGE.

A CHANGE as to surrounding circumstances and a change of heart, these are too often confounded, as if the one were the necessary result, or accompaniment of the other.

We have a remarkable instance of a man, who was chosen to be an apostle, by our Blessed Lord, and placed in circumstances apparently the most favourable to the change of the man. He was for three years the highly-favoured companion of the holy Jesus. He was the witness of the miracles of love and power, wrought by his Lord.—He saw in Jesus Christ, a perfect example of every grace, which could possibly adorn the human character ; he heard from the lips of Jesus the most admirable

precepts of heavenly wisdom ; he was unable by the closest scrutiny to discover a flaw in the character of his divine Master. He beheld in Jesus a faultless temper, an unerring judgment, an exquisite propriety, and the loveliest consistency of life.

For those three years this gracious Master was his daily companion, to teach him, to counsel him, to warn him, or to encourage him. Every glorious privilege which man could enjoy, from the holy influence of such circumstances, was his : but he had neither the heart nor the will to profit by them.

In the case of this miserable man, there was the change of circumstances, but no change of heart ; there was the outward call, even from the highest authority ; but no inward call from the Holy Spirit.

This is an extreme case, but though in one sense it stands alone, who is there about to enter upon the ministry of the gospel, that may not find much in the way of warning, much to make him thoughtful, self-searching, and earnest in prayer, from the consideration of the case of this false yet highly-favoured disciple ? We need all to beware of trusting to the influence of the *circumstances* of our

position. We have no reason to conclude that any of our Lord's disciples were converted by their intercourse with Him—either by the heavenly truths which flowed from His lips, or by the example of His perfect goodness. It was in the midst of outward circumstances the most discouraging—their Master crucified and absent from them,—their dangers multiplied,—their desolation extreme, that it pleased God, according to the gracious word of their departed Lord, to send down the promised gift of the Holy Ghost, by whom the marvellous transformation of the inner man was to be effected ; and then, and not till then, the inward call was given and responded to. It seems to me impossible for any one to give too serious a consideration to this subject. Who can sufficiently realize its tremendous importance ? What indeed is a real and effectual call to the ministry of the gospel, but the receiving, as it were, the credentials of a divine appointment, to stand between the living God and a world dead in trespasses and sins, with the offer of life and immortality to come, from God, as a reconciled Father, to His lost and degraded children, through a new and living way, and that way no other than the blood of His own Son ?

“He is intended for the Church.” Such is the careless reply to a casual question :—“His uncle has promised him the family-living,” or,—“We have interest in a certain quarter.” And, who is thus spoken of?—We see before us an idle trifling young man, who has already given sufficient proof, that he has neither energy nor application enough to succeed in any secular profession, and whose only distinct perception of so sacred a calling, whose only reason for a decided preference towards a clergyman’s life, are, that he shall thus secure to himself a comfortable income, a pleasant parsonage, and an easy, idle life. We trace back his school and college course, and home pursuits ; but we can find no clear recognition of the duties of a Christian Pastor, no decided separation from the ways of an ungodly world, no preparation for the sacred office, which he expects to hold. He is almost, if not altogether, indifferent, as to what is required of him by way of preparation. But no, he is not quite indifferent, for, he cannot forget, that he must know enough Greek to construe the New Testament, and enough Latin to write a theme, on some theological subject, and *cram* just so much of the historical

facts of the Bible as to be able to write down a portion of the answers required in the ordination-papers of the Bishop's chaplain : he owns however that all this is a bore—and after all, this is so imperfectly prepared for, that when in the examination-room—were it not for a hint from some good-natured fellow-candidate, or more than a glance at his neighbour's written replies—which he manages here and there to copy—he would stand a great chance of being plucked. But he is not plucked. The circumstances in which he finds himself placed, have induced an unwonted gravity in his demeanour—the probability of disgrace from not passing, has roused him to unwonted exertion ; and he is gentlemanly and respectful in his manners. Neither the Bishop nor his chaplain possess the gift of discernment of spirits. They are not *altogether* satisfied with him, but they are not sufficiently dissatisfied to reject him. They speak to him with seriousness, and with kindness, on the awful responsibility of the calling, for which he has presented himself. He readily agrees to all they say to him, and makes the promises which they require from him, for though he is unable to conceive

a definite idea of what they mean, he can see no possible reason to object to any thing they say, and he will take good care that no impediment shall be presented on *his* part to his ordination. And thus he hears with no little satisfaction, the summons, by which he is bidden to attend at the cathedral on the following morning—to read over, nay, to study carefully, and with prayer, the ordination service; and to come in his gown. He enters the hallowed edifice at the appointed hour. The flutter of his silken robes, as he passes through the spacious nave to the choir of the fine old cathedral, is responded to by a pleasant flutter within his own bosom. He hears and answers to the solemn questions of the impressive service, with awe-struck emotion—an emotion which passes away however, before the service is over. He is ordained a minister of the sanctuary. The last hour has witnessed the outward change of the young worldling into a clergyman. A few hours or days after, he has entered his parish; and he finds, lying upon the table of his sitting-room, a letter directed to ‘The Rev. ——.’ It is from his mother, or his sister, full of affection and pleasant congratulation. He is pleased with

the writer, with the letter, and with himself. He gives a glance round the room : it is well enough for a lodging : and he knows he must put up with a lodging and a curacy for the first year after his ordination. For a year he remains there : certainly not wearing himself out, with the labours of his sacred calling : visiting the sick, when sent for ; but not knowing what to say in the sick chamber—preaching occasionally good sermons, which are recognised as copied, and approved by some of the more serious portion of the congregation, only they would have preferred the sermon as the author composed it ; and consider it any thing but improved by his alterations. He leads almost an idle life,—dull enough, because his heart is not in his work ; and because he cannot altogether avoid a feeling of dissatisfaction, from the consciousness that he is doing the least amount of work required of him. But the neighbourhood is what is called good, that is, there is a sprinkling of common-place county families, who are not wanting in their invitations to the young and gentlemanly curate, and whenever a dinner-party is proposed, he is invited, and wherever a dinner-party is assembled, he is

to be found. Notwithstanding all that has been said of late years against such doings by the heads of our Church, he is to be seen occasionally in a ball-room, and sometimes, even on a race-course. We should say he had no business there; for, so far as his office is concerned, he has not,—but take him apart from his office,—he is there in his element. He ought, however, never to have entered upon that office, or having done so, then, out of respect for the office, if for no better reason, and for the sake of common decency, he ought to be absent.

The year of his curate-life expires. We find him a rector, in priest's orders. The dull lodging in the country town, is exchanged for the pleasant and elegant rectory—and whether he is himself conscious or unconscious of the change, we know not—but it is evident enough to others, that he has exchanged the easy indifference of an idle curate, for the self-importance and the authority of office of an idle rector. He can assume, on certain occasions, a slightly pompous air. He was as one *under orders*, while a curate; and however little the restraint imposed upon him,—the influence was beneficial, so far as it went;

but that restraint is now removed. He has acquired a taste for Church architecture, and in his conversation, as well as in his sermons, he dwells not unfrequently on apostolical succession, and the evils of dissent. A large and commodious meeting-house in the centre of his parish, and which is certainly an outrage upon all rules of architecture, provokes his spleen; and the thought that the emptiness of his church is occasioned by the crowded congregations of the chapel, rouses his indignation. He falls into the common mistake, that the proper way to banish dissent, is to abuse dissenters: and therefore instead of living down dissent by the love and zeal of his own ministrations, he thinks to preach it down, in his addresses from the pulpit, to the few among his flock who are not dissenters, and still well-disposed to the Established Church.

The consequence—a very common one—is, that he builds up the lukewarm in prejudices, and shocks, even if he does not alienate, the more serious portion of the flock, who still cling to the beautiful service of the Church of England, and assemble within the walls of his Church. They grieve over the spirit which he manifests; and they cannot shut their eyes to

the fact, that however warm his zeal in the pulpit may appear, which is after all, but party zeal, he is cold as death with regard to spiritual things out of the pulpit. But time passes away; and he gradually sinks down into unconcern and apathy. And while he feels the same enmity at heart against his dissenting parishioners as at first, he gives up the thought of reclaiming them, as hopeless, and gets accustomed to the sight of empty pews, and looks of indifference. So far as his sacred profession is concerned, he becomes at length almost a nonentity in the opinion of his flock; and adds to the number of those who may well be reckoned cumber-grounds in the vineyard of the Lord. "Son of man," said the prophet: "what is the vine-tree more than any tree; or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work, or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?" What indeed, is a minister of Christ more than any other man? "What is a vine-tree more than any tree"—if it bear no fruit? What is it but a cumber-ground in the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts? It is not for its wood, or for its blossoms, or for its fragrance, but for its rich and clustering

fruit, that the vine takes a first and foremost place among the trees of the field.

“No, this is too bad,” my reader may say — “this is an exaggeration : why bring before me such a picture ?” “Because it is true, in too many a case,” I reply. I speak advisedly ; I allow there are many, very many bright and lovely exceptions to such a case ; but I repeat, there are too many instances of such a commencement to the course of one, who is, by outward calling, and by the sacred form of ordination, a pastor of “the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.” I have not exaggerated, I have merely given the description of the ordination of a trifler, a worldling, nothing more. The letter of a young minister of the gospel is now before me, in which he speaks with deep sorrow of heart, of the profane levity of two of his companions, on the very evening before their ordination. The waiter at the Inn, where they were staying till their ordination was over, had done something to displease one of them, and he cried out, “The devil take the waiter !” when the other candidate for holy orders exclaimed, “Hurrah for the Deacon’s first speech !” Such was the levity, to say no worse, of two

young men, who were ordained the next day at — Cathedral. Why do I write thus ? Because I think that the quiet consideration of such statements may lead some youthful reader to pause, and consider seriously the tremendous responsibility he is thrusting himself into, when from any motive whatever, short of the Divine call, which every minister of our Church solemnly professes to have received, he presents himself for ordination. "That the Christian Ministry," as it has been truly said, "has its foundation in the life of God in the soul," is a truth which will not admit of a moment's question. The candidate really in earnest to ascertain his fitness for so sacred an office,* "will take nothing for granted." An unconverted preacher standing forth to preach the Gospel of converting grace, wants the one indispensable qualification for the office. Were he even to possess in rich abundance, all other possible qualifications, he would, in spite of them all, prove himself deplorably unfitted for the work of the ministry. We might imagine the Lord God—I speak with reverence—saying to him, "I called thee not ; lie down again." Personal holiness,

* Winalow.

is, in fact, essential to ministerial efficiency ; and in whom will personal holiness be found, but in him, who has personally experienced that great change, which is as life from the dead.

Let then the thoughtless reader, who has chosen the ministry of the church as his profession, take heed. No change of circumstances attendant on an outward call, can possibly produce within him, that vital change, without which, no man can see the kingdom of God. He may pass through all the *circumstances* of a most solemn ordination, and be invested with all the *circumstances* of a pastoral charge, but he may be all the while the mere creature of such *outward circumstances*, and become nothing more than a "blind leader of the blind." What an essential difference there is in the state and case of the man who is inwardly moved of the Holy Ghost, to hear, as did the prophet of old, the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" and to reply—the love of Christ constraining him—"Here am I ; send me." And then to go forth as a herald of eternal life, to dying sinners—trembling—abashed—and well-nigh confounded with fear and self-distrust, exclaiming from the depths of his heart ; "Who

is sufficient for these things?" and who is yet, at the same time, lifted up as on angels' wings, by faith and hope, and confiding love, and strengthened with might in the inner man, to fulfil the work of the ministry, preaching Christ crucified, not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; and looking unto God to make manifest the savour of the knowledge of Christ, by him, in every place.

But supposing the young minister to be really called of God, and to enter in right earnest upon the sacred work of the ministry. It were surely advisable that he should learn by experience how to order a parish, before he is placed over it with the authority of a rector. In no other profession, but in that which is the most important, can a man take his place as a superior, till he has served under others, and been subject for some years to the wholesome restraint and discipline of an inferior office. But in our church, while too many are obliged to remain as curates, perhaps to the end of their lives, who are eminently qualified to take the sole charge of a parish, it often happens that some young novice in the ministry serves but a single year.

in a curacy, and is no sooner ordained priest, than he enters upon some important charge, for which he is utterly unfitted. This ought not to be : and our beloved church will never be enabled rightly to fulfil her mission, till some restrictive regulations on this point have been generally adopted. When writing of the inferior officers of the church, the great Apostle gives this direction, "Let these also," namely the deacons, "first be proved, then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless." The young minister has much to unlearn, and much to learn under the authority of a superior in station and experience, before he can be fitted in any way to keep that which has been committed to his trust : and to shew himself approved unto God, a workman that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. "Let *these* also first be proved," I would therefore say of every young and inexperienced minister, entering the Church of England—It is an Apostle's inspired command, and the wisdom of the command speaks for itself. "These things I write unto thee," said that great Apostle, "that thou mightest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of

God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Every young minister who has been taught to know himself—and till he *has* been thus taught, he is assuredly not qualified to become a teacher of others—ought to approve the wisdom of the Apostle's words : " Let these also first be proved," This is no light matter. " It is required in stewards of the mysteries of God," above all men, " that a man be found faithful."

Alas, the spirit of priest-craft is too readily imbibed by the young and inexperienced. The natural heart gladly drinks in the pleasant intoxication of power and authority ; the mere office of a superior may give a consciousness of importance, as perilous to the young minister himself, as it is absurd and offensive to the world around him ; and nothing but the genuine simplicity of the spiritual mind, in one who has been exercised unto godliness, can keep a man humble and steady at any period, as the pastor of the sheep of Christ's flock.

The above remarks are not the theory of the writer, but have become his settled convictions, not only from the observation of many years, but from his own personal experience in the early period of his ministry. He is

grateful to God for that good providence under which he was kept in the office of a curate for the first fifteen out of the seven-and-twenty years which have elapsed since he first entered upon the work of the ministry. The mere subjection of will to which he was brought to yield himself on different points, was an admirable discipline. He can testify to the genuine kindness of heart, and the gentlemanly spirit of the several clergymen under whom he was placed. There was never an attempt at any improper control, even where there was a decided difference of opinion on some subjects of vital importance, on the part of any one of them ; but the mere circumstance, that they were his superiors in office, and that he was placed in a subordinate position, taught him at least the useful lesson, that "*meekness of wisdom,*" if imperatively required in every department of the Christian Ministry, is indispensable in a young and utterly inexperienced clergyman.

CHAPTER II

MY FIRST CURACY

Most young clergymen probably cherish in their minds some pleasant vision of the sphere in which they hope to labour, forgetting that they have a call from God to obey, and his work to do, wherever he may please to send them. Instead of the quiet country village, and the wild and lovely scenery which I had pictured to myself, in which my natural tastes and inclinations would have been indulged, I found myself placed, under circumstances which I did not feel justified in opposing, in a country town of between three and four thousand inhabitants, in the tame, but not unpleasant county of S——lk. But I soon found that it is impossible to engage heartily in any part of the Lord's vineyard, without

becoming deeply interested in the work. An excellent American clergyman once said to me, on my asking him what he thought of various parts of England which he had seen : " I crossed the Atlantic not to see places, but men : " in like manner I soon felt that I had come to H——gh not to gratify my taste for the beauties of external nature ; but to occupy myself with the highest interests of immortal men.

The ancient town consists of three broad streets, one about a mile in extent, all composed chiefly of the cottages of the poor : and no very long time had elapsed before I found myself at home in almost every one of them. I have never before or since seen such deplorable poverty, and in many instances, such awful instances of depravity and crime. The evils of the old poor-law had then almost reached their height in that part of England. I say almost, for I heard after I had left H——gh, that things grew worse and worse ; but notwithstanding the misery and the vice which met my eyes daily, I still feel it impossible to describe the absorbing interest which my occupation excited within me ; and I may truly say that there was scarcely a family however

wretched, or however vicious, in which I did not find that kindness and sympathy would not win for me a welcome, and where I was not treated with respect and even courtesy.

I had been ordained a deacon at Cambridge, in the Chapel of Christ's College, by the present Bishop of Lincoln, with letters dimissory from the Archbishop of Canterbury, and I set out early in the week for my curacy. My road lay through Bury St. Edmunds, and the ancient town of Lavenham, but I was able to give but a passing glance at the stately ruins at Bury, and the fine old Church of Lavenham, one of the most graceful structures I have ever seen. It was in the charming month of May ; the fields and hedge-row trees were bright with the fresh green of spring, and the cottage-gardens by the road-side gay with wall-flowers and lilacs in full bloom. The day was warm and beautiful, and here and there the women were sitting at their spinning-wheels before the cottage-doors. I could feel the throbbing of my heart as the carriage in which I drove descended the hill at the entrance of H——gh, when my eyes rested for the first time upon the clustered houses and Church-spire of the ancient town.

I crossed the bridge over which the godly Rowland Taylor passed when he entered H——gh for the last time to witness a good confession of the faith once delivered to the saints, at the stake and in the flames of martyrdom, passing through the midst of the flock to whom he had so lovingly preached "Jesus Christ and him crucified."

I stopped at the rectory, before the noble tower which serves as a gateway to the house. It was built in the reign of Henry the seventh ; but has sustained no injury from time. I was received by the good old Rector and his family with as much cordiality and kindness as if I had formed one of their own domestic circle ; and during the time that I remained as his curate, I saw no change, except that of increasing kindness from every member of the family. They had insisted on my being their guest for a few days ; and the kind old doctor himself led me to a pleasant chamber, overlooking the charming old rectory-garden.

I look back with delight and gratitude to my intercourse with that family : and knowing them intimately as I did, I can truly say, that I have seldom met with such genuine simplicity, and so much of that kindness which is

of the heart. Their very faults partook of the simplicity of their character, for they were utterly unskilled in the art of concealing them. How many persons have I since met, standing far higher in the estimation of the world, just because they were so much more like the world; how many that were deemed much more unworldly, who had not had half the same honesty of heart and integrity of principle!

Had I been the son of my kind rector, he could not have placed greater confidence in me: and even on points where he did not agree with me, I always found such real gentlemanly feeling, such urbanity and gentleness, that it was impossible not to love him. He sometimes gave an amusing importance to trifles, but he never failed to give its proper importance to every thing of a really serious character. It was one of his easy requirements of me, that the rector and curate should always walk together to church in full canonicals; and I see him now, his finely-shaped head uncovered, and his handsome features beaming with kindness, coming forth from under the venerable arch of the gateway, his large sermon-case, and his bouquet of the

brightest and sweetest flowers of the season in one hand, and his shovel-hat with its rose in the other, turning occasionally to make some courteous remark to his curate, or some smiling salutation to the groups of his parishioners around the porch. He would often speak of the noble form of our liturgy, and he shewed his admiration and delight in it by the manner in which he made the responses, audibly, but with all his heart, and sometimes with the tears filling his eyes. His veneration for the character of the Martyr, as he always called Rowland Taylor, was very great; and it was chiefly owing to his exertions, that the spot where he died, and the old fragment of stone with its rude inscription still marking the place, were enclosed, and a monument erected to the memory of the noble martyr. How many an instance do I remember of the warmth and tenderness of his heart. On one occasion he had requested me to bring a class of the elder school-boys before him, in order that he might admonish some of them for bad conduct in church: and I ushered the band up the spiral staircase of the tower, to his library, a noble apartment immediately above the gateway. The boys were not all offenders;

but if I remember, it was the whole of the first class that I brought up to him. We found him with as much severity as it was possible to throw into his mild countenance, evidently intending to make his presence terrible to the offenders. Without waiting for my report, or hearing me point out the especial delinquents, he commenced an attack upon a gentle and peculiarly well-behaved boy, and spoke in so loud a voice, and with such awful tones, that I was unable for some time to make him understand that he was addressing the wrong boy, and that he was not in any way to blame; but in another moment he was seeking to comfort the weeping boy, with a voice trembling with tender emotion, while the tears were trickling down his own face.

One of the first affecting calls which I received in my new office of a minister of the gospel, was to visit three young men who were struck by the sun when working in the harvest fields. It was indeed a remarkable fact that they should all have been seized at the same time; and I went alternately from one house to the other, in different parts of the town, to witness nearly the same scene: the young wife and her children, almost overwhelmed

with grief, and the husband, in the prime of youth and strength, lying in almost a hopeless state. They were at times delirious, one of them more so than the other two : and after a few days, the skill and the medicine of the doctors proved unavailing in the case of two of them. They had both been well-conducted young men, and so far as I could judge, appeared to be truly penitent, clinging earnestly to the hope set before them, and looking for pardon and eternal life to the glorious Redeemer who had died for them.

I was with one of the young men at the time of his departure. It was sudden, and the shock was the greater to them who were present, because the worst symptoms of his illness had yielded to the means resorted to, and there was reason to suppose that the danger was over. Just as a ray of hope gleamed upon the anxious face of his young wife, he sunk back and expired in her arms. The next day I saw the lifeless body laid out upon the bed, and prepared for the coffin. They had scattered flowers over it. His shirt-collar was open, and a long wreath of Loves-lies-bleeding lay across his manly chest, its blood-red colour contrasting deeply with the

pallid whiteness of the skin. Not many hours before, his heart had throbbed beneath that bosom with all the warmth of honest affection for the delicate and gentle creature, who stood weeping by my side, a bereaved and desolate widow.

The third man bore a doubtful character. He was when in health a daring and determined character ; seldom if ever at Church, but often at the alehouse, and leading altogether a wild and reckless life—but I have seldom seen any one apparently upon a dying bed who seemed under deeper convictions of sin, or more tremblingly anxious that God might spare him a little longer, and give him time to prove the sincerity of his repentance, and the earnestness of his desire to lead a new life. His illness took the turn of an infectious fever, and the small close room in which he lay, with the sun burning upon the roof—for it was uncieled—and the small low window which admitted little or no air, was almost pestilential. I was warned by his doctor of the danger I incurred in going to him ; but it was impossible to think of danger when a dying fellow creature seemed to hang upon the words of the message of God, which it was

my office to bring before him. His deep anxiety gave a kind of eloquence to his protestations of sincerity ; and from what I had known of the man before, and his careless unconcern, those protestations were the more striking. God heard the prayers that were offered, and the unfruitful fig-tree was spared, when it seemed to all as if the decree had already gone forth : " Cut it down." The bodies of the two other men were borne to the grave, and this man slowly recovered. It was a mysterious and awful dispensation. The time that was asked, was granted ; the opportunity so earnestly desired, was afforded ; I could not help trusting that the convictions which had worked so powerfully within him, had been those which issue in conversion. But was it so ? About a month after his recovery, on passing through one of the most wretched parts of the town, my attention was called to a crowd assembled round the door of a public house ; the door was closed, and the words I heard when drawing nigh, were ; " Oh Sir, nobody dares to enter ; there's a drunken man raving like a madman in that house ; he has been striking right and left, and striving to tear up the benches, and now

he has got into the bar, and they can do nothing with him." I managed to enter the house, and I found the man lying on the floor, raving and pouring forth the most frightful oaths. His violence had apparently disarmed him of strength, for he did not attempt to rise; he knew me not, but I knew him too well. I recognized in that frantic drunkard the sole survivor of that band of three, who had been smitten as it were on the same day, and whom I had last seen apparently penetrated to the heart with a sense of God's goodness towards him, and of his own unworthiness of such goodness. A few years after I had good reason to know that he had sunk into deeper guilt; and I felt that the two widowed mothers, who were still mourning over the husbands of their youth, were happier and more blest in their desolate homes than the wife of that hardened offender.

How touchingly one of them had spoken to me of her loss, "He had always," she said, "a strong arm to work for me and for his children, and he was always so kind and sweet-tempered to me and to his little ones; and when he came home in the evening, he was pleased and contented with anything I had to

set before him, and he never touched a penny of his wages, but brought all the money home to me at the end of the week." And yet he was taken and the other left. Was not that survivor spared that he might see that God had at least given him time to turn to Him and to seek pardon and repentance? What his course may have been since I last saw him I know not, but from what I did see of him after his recovery, I was thus early in the ministry taught that the penitence of many a death-bed may wear an appearance of reality, by which the sick man is not only deceiving others but himself. It is not for me to judge any man, and I can truly say that in such a case I would rather hope than fear; but unless I am much mistaken, that man had commenced a course which could only end in everlasting wretchedness.

CHAPTER III

THE WORD OF GOD

THE cry has often been raised, that the church is in danger. Whatever may have been the ground for this alarm in days gone by, there is but too much reason to fear that such is now really the case. I do not speak of the attacks of her enemies ;—we have little reason to fear them. But there are fatal symptoms about her state, at present, symptoms which are the too sure forerunners of corruption and decay. Many of her faithful members have been long quietly observant of the causes of decay to which I allude—many who are not men of morbid minds, but who cannot shut their eyes to evils which increase with every passing day.

The way-marks of truth and error are plainly laid down in the word of God ; and

he who diligently seeks for divine guidance may easily find them. But when we look to our statesmen, we find able and eminent men substituting their own wretched systems of expediency, for the simple wisdom and the glorious principles of the Holy Bible; strangely forgetful that if that Bible be really from God—it is not possible to conceive that He will give His blessing to any systems which are not founded upon its principles, or are in any way opposed to them. Statesmen who profess to regard the word of God, not only as the charter of their salvation, but as the spring-head of all wisdom, would in fact be wiser than God. Surely it would be the more honest way—awful as that course would be—to declare openly their ignorance or their unbelief of its truths—than thus to mislead themselves and others.

Past events in the history of their country hold out their warnings in vain. The recorded experience of some of our wisest and greatest statesmen in former times, offer instruction to them in vain. They are occupied in the ceaseless work of sapping and mining the bulwarks of our Protestant constitution.

Who can read the Parliamentary reports of

the day, without being struck by the calm and complacent self-assurance, of some of our leaders in both houses, and on both sides of either house. Expediency before man, rather than high principle before God, and the upright decision of a real Christian—on questions where right and wrong are as palpable as light and darkness. And more pitiable, because less considerate, is the levity of some of our second-rate statesmen—men of less weight and character—whose empty declamations are but as the idle flutterings of some ephemeral insect, around subjects of grave importance, and of vital interest.

All this is sad, and calls for deep sorrow of heart. But even this is less deplorable than the more fatal symptoms of corruption and decay, which manifest themselves in those who are peculiarly called upon to stand forth as the expounders of the oracles of God, and the teachers and guides of the people. The teaching of the Pulpit, in accordance with the false notions which too commonly prevail, is considered by many, both among the clergy and the laity, as of far less importance than it deserves. Its influence for good might be, and has been, incalculably great. It is too

apparent, alas, from many of the sermons which are preached, that the system of the preacher is not drawn immediately from the word of God : and that a lower standard has been taken by the minister. We look in vain for the simplicity which is in Christ,—for the strength and raciness of Holy Scripture. It appears to me that the cause of this deteriorated tone, both among the clergy and the laity, is to be found in the fact, that the word of God is neglected. The Bible is not in its proper place : it is not regarded as of supreme authority, that authority beyond which there is no appeal. It has been truly said : “that men act in a very different manner from this with regard to human laws. The advocate does not cite the comment, but the statute : the physician, the artist, refer to the rules of their science, instead of resting on the explanations. They know the value of certainty, where authority can be had ; and instead of substituting conjectural for ascertained truths, they go to the fountain-head of knowledge, and each desires to be the commentator for himself. But in the study of theology, the reverse has too often been witnessed.” With reference especially to preaching, it is impos-

sible not to feel that its influence must fall infinitely below that which it is appointed to be when this is the case. The preacher may "excite the natural feelings : he may amuse the imagination ; he may touch the heart ; but he never can speak with the power of a servant of God, nor ever exhort and rebuke with all authority, as becomes his office. Without this, he may produce, under favourable circumstances, a transient effect ; he may use the general truths of the gospel, as a means of artificial excitement ; but he never can win souls to Christ, nor prove himself a wise master-builder by the endurance and stability of his work. But with this single power he may be like the youthful David, a glorious instrument in the hands of God, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." *

There is, I repeat, no appeal from the word of God. Let the minister of Christ be true to the word, and preach it faithfully and lovingly, and it will do its own work : it will

* Raikes on Clerical Education.

be either the savour of life unto life, or of death unto death to every hearer.

It is from the preaching of the word in its simplicity, its entireness and its fulness, and to nothing short of this, that we are warranted in looking for seals to our ministry. The living word of the living God will not return to Him void, but will accomplish that whereunto it is sent ; and we who are ministers of that word have cause indeed to tremble lest we darken the counsel of the Lord by words without knowledge, or by any words of our own, even if we possessed the eloquence of an angel.

There is one rule which the preacher of the gospel should never lose sight of : It is this. " Thus saith the Lord ! "—" He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully." I well remember a sermon preached some years ago, and with which at the time the preacher felt thoroughly dissatisfied : perhaps if he had spoken the truth to himself he would have owned that his dissatisfaction arose from the deep sense that he felt of his own incapacity, and the poverty of his own ideas and illustrations in that sermon. He came down from

the pulpit humbled in his own eyes, and cast down in spirit ; feeling in how inefficient a manner he had ministered to the wants of a crowded congregation. One beautiful sentence however of Holy Scripture had been constantly brought before his hearers ; and secret prayer had not been wanting on the part of the preacher, that the Lord God would send down His Holy Spirit and give effect to His own word. The words I allude to—and they were those of the text—were from the 32nd chap. of Deuteronomy, and part of the 47th verse : “ It is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life.”

On the following morning, a letter was put into the preacher's hand. It came by the post. It was short, and evidently written by one unskilled in letter-writing, but its few earnest words were eloquent with the importunate anxiety of a soul newly awakened to a sense of its own priceless value, and to the consciousness of guilt to which no remedy had been as yet applied. The writer asked for guidance and instruction ; and spoke as one bewildered and distressed, helpless, and almost hopeless of relief. The conclusion of the letter was peculiarly touching. “ Oh Sir, do not turn away from me, *for it is not a vain thing*

for me, *because it is my life !*” A few words were added by way of postscript, requesting that a reply might be sent by the post, directed to two initial letters, Post office, ——. A reply was immediately sent ; but the reply was rather in the shape of an enquiry, requesting to know more of the writer of the letter, whose sex and position were not declared. Another letter soon followed : it began with these words : “I am a poor servant-girl.” And after speaking of her extreme ignorance, and of her deep anxiety, the following short account was given. “Last Sunday I went to church in the morning, and I laughed all the time ; I went to church in the afternoon, and I slept during the whole service. I went to your lecture, Sir, in the evening, and then it pleased God, for the first time in my life, to shew me that I was a poor, lost, miserable creature.” The words of the letter were ill-shaped, and the page seemed disfigured by them ; but there was a natural flow of language, beautiful from its earnest and touching simplicity. If I remember rightly, no name was yet given, and no clue afforded by which I might discover the abode of the writer. But I now felt that I might be far more useful to my un-

known correspondent, if I could see and converse with her ; if I could hear from her own lips her difficulties and her doubts, than if we continued to correspond by letter. But in this I was mistaken. She complied with my request, and called upon me. But she who could write with so much ease, and express her feelings so readily on paper, had scarcely a word to say, but was abashed and silent, proposing no question for herself, and answering those I put to her with a reserve which I found it impossible to overcome. During an acquaintance of many years, this manner has still continued. She has written to me from time to time, and in her letters, she is able to express herself with the same natural flow of language. But from that evening, when the word of God won its way to her heart, and the Spirit of God impressed its vital truth there, awakening her whole soul to a sense of its eternal interests, quickening her conscience with the deep conviction of her lost and sinful state—and causing her to realize that night the message of God to her soul, and to “know that it was not a vain thing to her, because it was her life”—a change as remarkable as life from the dead, took place in her ;

and she has continued from that time in one quiet course of consistent godliness. She was one of an ungodly, but respectable family, and had been till then careless and light-minded. Nothing has been more remarkable in her ever since, than her unvarying seriousness and her modest propriety of manner. The bow had been drawn at a venture, but the arrow, directed by God's unerring hand, had reached its mark, and by what was literally the foolishness of preaching, an immortal but perishing creature had been made wise unto salvation. It is a sad, sad proof of the presumptuous ignorance of some professing themselves to be wise in the present day, that they attempt to throw discredit upon preaching—"God's great ordinance," as Cecil has well called it, to bring souls to Himself. There is scarcely a portion of the inspired word more full of solemn grandeur, more awfully impressive, than the commission given by the great apostle Paul to his beloved son in the faith, towards the close of his Second Epistle to Timothy—his last Epistle—"I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing, and His kingdom ; *preach the*

word." "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," for it is by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever that man is born again; "and this is the word," adds the Apostle Peter, "which by the gospel is preached unto you," 1 Peter i. 23—25.

The letter which follows, bears in so remarkable a manner upon the foregoing observations on the power of the word of God, that I think I cannot do better than append it here.

It was addressed to me by a very fine manly fellow, at the time that I was the Rector of St. Peter's parish, in the city of C——r. This man afterwards became a member of my Bible class of Christian brothers, and a regular attendant at the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. It made my heart glad to see him, meekly kneeling at the table of the Lord, in his full regimentals as a sergeant of the guards, his pious and happy wife kneeling by his side—eating together of the same bread, and drinking together of the same cup of holy communion, as heirs together of the same glorious inheritance.

"And the soldiers likewise demanded of

him, saying, And what shall we do ? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely ; and be content with your wages." *Luke iii. 14.*

"Rev. Sir,—I hope you will excuse the liberty I have taken in thus addressing you, but you lately said, that "the Christian must by no means conceal his sentiments, but that he should hold them forth for the benefit of others ;" whether my sentiments will be of any good to others, God only knows, may his blessing rest upon what I write, poor, feeble, and simple as it may be.

"A few Sundays ago, being at St. Peter's Church, I was very much struck with one verse of the second lesson, so much so that I could not for the life of me pay any attention to the remainder of the service. I went home and read that verse over and over several times the next day. It was still the same, I could not forget it. It disturbed me greatly, and yet I could not tell why it did so, but I still took the Bible, and read that verse. At last I applied it to myself with prayer to God to enlighten my understanding, and shew me why I should be so uneasy about it, the verse is to

be found in the 3rd chapter of Luke, it is the 14th verse, "And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do, and he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages."

"Now, Sir, as to violence I thought I never had to my recollection done violence to any man, so I said to myself, that part of the verse cannot be the cause of its weighing so heavily on my mind. I applied the next parts, "neither accuse any falsely : " this like the other part I could not remember to have done ; but when I came to apply the next part, and to consider a little about being "content with my wages," I could very well remember the time when I should not have been content, if I had had ten times as much as I now have. Thus, Sir, my eyes began to be partly opened. I went on to consider how it was that I had been so discontented. It was because I had been used to neglect the principal part of a soldier's duty, that which all soldiers should consider deeply, *the duty they owe to God*,—this it was which I had long neglected,—this was the cause of discontent for many years. I had received a soldier's wages without ever once returning

thanks to Him who alone could have made me contented and happy with my wages, and given me a blessing with them. These reflections, Sir, shewed me that I had been guilty of the other two sins, namely, violence, and false accusation. In the first place I found that I myself was the man against whom I had committed the greatest violence,—and not only against myself, for often have I in my drunkenness committed violence against the dear wife of my bosom, whom I now love better than ever I did, and many a time had I, when in my drunken state, accused her falsely—when I think of the awful violence I have committed against myself in so long neglecting to attend to the duty which I now begin to see I owe to God, it makes me indeed wonder at His mercy and goodness in thus sparing me to see the awful danger I was in.

“I cannot, Rev. Sir, express my feelings to you on this occasion as I should wish to do : you will see by these few lines that I have spent my time in sin and wickedness, instead of improving it in learning to live to the glory of God. May God help me now, and strengthen me against all temptations, and against the

corruption of my own deceitful and wicked heart.

I remain, Rev. Sir,
Your obedient, humble servant,

HENRY ———,
Sergeant, ——— Regiment."

CHAPTER IV.

THE PULPIT.

THE importance of the short space of time which is, as it were, given by common consent to the receiving of the message of the Lord God to His assembled worshippers, is almost incalculable ; and yet how few ministers seem ever to have become properly aware of this. I speak here especially of the message from the pulpit. The word of God has been spoken, and is always spoken, when any portion of the Bible is read to the people in the course of the service. But when the sermon is preached, it may be more peculiarly said, that the minister stands up for the purpose of delivering the message of God to the people. Is this opportunity improved, or is it lost ? We should do well to put this ques-

tion to ourselves. The minister should be as one, who hears a voice from among the assembly, addressing him in these well-known words—"Now then, we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." *

At such seasons the minister of the Gospel occupies a vantage-ground, which can scarcely be said to be offered to him on any other occasion. The upraised eyes, the attentive ears of those who sit around him, convey to him the assurance that the whole assembly have come away from the world—from its business, and its cares, for the express purpose of giving their quiet, serious consideration to the word spoken to them. A wise and faithful servant of Christ, really intent upon his Master's work, would surely put forth all his powers to seize upon the opportunity, and catch the moment ere it flies. He would bring full before them the affecting claims of their Divine Redeemer upon their love; and strive to exercise that gentle wisdom, in which *he* is skilled, that winneth souls. Some one hearer may be there, who might have profited by that opportunity to all eternity, but to

whom it may prove an opportunity lost, and that perhaps for ever; it may be the last time that the word of God is heard by that man on earth! Ah, how shall the watchman answer for neglect of duty! Will not the blood of that immortal creature be required at his hand?

Let the best instructed scribe, however the most gifted preacher, beware of a harsh or dogmatical spirit. Too many, for instance, who are zealous in their Master's cause, and in deep, sad earnest in seeking the salvation of their hearers, are apt to acquire a habit of scolding, or of angry expostulations from the pulpit, unconscious that they have caught more of the spirit of the two disciples, who desired to call down fire from heaven upon those who refused to receive their Master, than of the lovely Spirit of our gracious Lord, when he rebuked his disciples, and said to them, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of; for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

The authority of the preacher of the everlasting Gospel is unquestionable, it is the authority of an ambassador, not of an earthly monarch, but of the King of kings. He

stands up "*in Christ's stead*," but his own spirit should be loving and gentle, even to tenderness. "We were gentle among you," writes the great preacher to the Gentiles, in his 1st epistle to the Thessalonians, ii. 7. "even as a nurse cherisheth her children." The same Apostle who writes, "Exhort, and rebuke with *all authority*,"* writes also, "Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with *all long-suffering*,"† and his directions to the preacher are, "Be gentle unto all men, apt to teach—patient—in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves."‡ "Knowing the terrors of the Lord," he says, "we persuade men." These inspired instructions claim a peculiar consideration from the youthful and inexperienced preacher at the present day, indeed at all times. The most dogmatical preachers are too commonly those, who, from their youth and inexperience, have the least right to be so.

There is so much truth, and so much good sense in the following remarks on the sermons of some of our young and crude preachers, that I copied them some years ago for my own use, from a paper in the Christian Observer.

"The true character of the gospel is tender-

* Titus ii. 15.

† 2 Tim. iv. 2.

‡ 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

ness: tears, not frowns, become the pulpit : and the most profligate sinner should perceive you feel for him, and are anxious to convince and persuade him, not that you are angry with him. Should the minister of Christ be led by the charges which he specifies, to learn to mix up a still larger portion of affectionate exposition and melting entreaty with his just remonstrances and rebukes, the effect would be greatly to the furtherance of the gospel. "Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we *persuade* men." The best rule, perhaps, which could be given to any clergyman who is accused of pulpit harshness, is to keep himself almost entirely out of his sermons. We have known some clergymen, especially young clergymen, with the best intentions, so fill their discourses with explanations of their own conduct, vindicating their style of preaching, telling their people how much they feel, why they think it their duty to speak as they do, and ever using authority, instead of appeal or argument ; that while they mean only to magnify their office, the people think they are only magnifying themselves : and that their whole address is, substantially saying, "I sit in Moses's seat," and it is your duty to obey my instructions.'

It is a rule laid down by all the masters of rhetoric, that a public speaker, even when he speaks with authority, ought always to exhibit the most perfect respect, nay, even a degree of modest deference, towards his auditory. If he once fail in this, he loses all his influence among them.

For want of observing this rule of common sense, a rule remarkably displayed in the Holy Scriptures, and of which St. Paul's Epistles and addresses (see for example that to Philemon) are beautiful illustrations, many a young minister has greatly impaired his own usefulness, especially where his flock included many persons of high education, and conspicuous stations in society. We have known a young man, not perhaps yet in Priest's orders, under the idea of being faithful, and keeping up the dignity of his office, stand before a large assembly of persons, chiefly of the middle and upper classes of society, and preach in a style of dictation which only provoked hostility, without conducting to self-examination or conviction. Instead of proving and reasoning, and urging, and remonstrating, and appealing, making the word of God the only weapon of his warfare,

his discourses have been one tissue of unintentional egotism. "What I would have you do, is this;" "it is your duty to do so and so, whether you will hear or forbear." "I charge you now to go to your houses and meditate on all I have said;" "it is our duty to preach, and yours to hear," and so forth. The popular comment on all which was, "That young man seems to lift up himself wonderfully; I suppose he is come to set us all to rights." When a clergyman, in these days of unhappily lax discipline and dilapidated pastoral authority, has by long and affectionate intercourse with his flock, worked his way to influence among them, his own wishes and directions become arguments: and he might be egotistical with less offence, though egotism in such a case would be superfluous. He knows a far better method "of setting people to rights;" for we do not mean that it is not the duty even of the youngest minister, to wish really "to set all his parish to rights;" he goes there for the very purpose; he would offend against God, his own soul, and his flock, if he did not make it his constant effort; but he has lamentably mistaken the true method of so doing, if his conduct or preaching call forth

what is currently understood by that expression. Might he not have preached the same solemn truths, and with equal zeal and faithfulness, and yet have left a very different impression? "That seems a very modest young man." "Yes, but how earnest he was. I never saw a clergyman more impressed with his subject, or more anxious to impress others. I do not quite understand his doctrines, and I think some things that he said were objectionable; for he seemed, I thought, to set up faith above works; and to speak as if there were little use in being good, and going to church and sacrament; but he evidently wishes us well, and was not dogmatical, and did not force his sentiments upon us like an election speech at a hustings. *I say so. I say so.* I quite like the young man's spirit, and shall go again in the afternoon."

These matters will of course vary with places, preachers, and audiences: for the ignorant and illiterate often prefer being dogmatized upon; they measure the strength of proof by the vehemence of assertion; and a preacher whose mind is cast into a reflecting mould, and who is not accustomed to enforce his positions, by "*I say so,*" and "*only listen*

to me," often finds some difficulty in adapting himself to their mental habits. But in the case of the more refined and educated ranks of society, this style of address is usually powerless and revolting. The physician has dropped it, the man of science has dropped it: it is not heard of in the senate or the lecture-room: when therefore, a young man, truly zealous and pious, but with perhaps somewhat a slender stock of divinity, and not over full of general reading, adopts it, it is almost sure to create disgust. He may fall into it either unconsciously or from a mistaken notion of what is the Scriptural authority of his function: assuming the express language of prophets and apostles, as if he stood exactly in their place, and was commissioned to address mankind in precisely the same tone of authority. Authority he has in declaring his Saviour's message; but the sermon in which he declares it is his own; and this ought greatly to modify the mode of his address.'

Vehement and reiterated assertion goes for nothing; this is the preacher's own, not his master's: he is a pleader, not a judge, a fallible expounder of infallible statutes, and

he sadly mistakes his province, if he mixes up himself with his message.'

I remember one sermon which seemed to me nearer the perfection of preaching, than any that I have ever heard before or since. The preacher was one of my most valued friends. He is one of the most eloquent men this age has produced ; but there was nothing of what the world calls eloquence in that sermon. It was rather the preaching of one, who like the great Apostle, had thrown aside every advantage which belonged to himself or to his peculiar gifts—all eloquence and excellency of speech or of wisdom, and was determined to know nothing among his hearers, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

The church in which I heard this sermon, had been lately built in the heart of a district in London, inhabited by the most abandoned characters—a locality reckoned hardly safe in open day. In walking thither, we had to pass through one street in particular, filled with dens of iniquity of various kinds. I have seen there for instance, hundreds of silk pocket-handkerchiefs, of all colours and patterns, hung out openly for sale, furnished, it is well known, from the spoils of the pickpockets.

There stood that quiet sanctuary ; its open doors and free seats, inviting the very refuse and dregs of society to come in, and hear the full free offer of pardon and grace to the vilest and to the worst ; and there, in the midst of a mixed multitude, hanging with breathless attention on his deep and solemn voice, stood that earnest preacher of the word, which had melted and transformed his own inmost heart—pleading as for his own soul, with the souls of those that heard him. We had come from a distance, and the sermon had already commenced when we entered the church. The scripture on which he was preaching, was perhaps the most appropriate that he could have chosen for such a place and such a people—"This man receiveth sinners !" * The words were frequently on his lips ; the spirit of those words breathed in every tone of his voice, which was broken and trembling at times with deep emotion, and in every change of his expressive countenance. Christ Jesus was all and in all in that sermon ; His name was truly there as ointment poured forth, and "the whole house was filled with the odour of the ointment." The preacher

* Luke xv.

spoke of that glorious Redeemer as the human, tender, sympathising friend and brother of the wretched sinner—the outcast—the lost—the dead in trespasses and sins. He dwelt upon the gentleness and kindness of the Lord Jesus, and seemed as one pouring balm into the wounds of the broken-hearted, and meeting the cold repulsive hardness of the hardened, with all the tenderness of his Master's inconceivable love.

He described the whole Mission and character of the Lord Jesus Christ, as embodied in those touching words; "This man receiveth sinners." He enlarged upon the divine simplicity of the salvation of the gospel of the grace of God—a full, free, offer of forgiveness to every one, who will call upon the name of the Lord. He invited all to come and buy, without money, and without price. He met the earnest anxious cry of the despairing, trembling wretch—"What must I do to be saved?" with that full yet concise epitome of the whole gospel, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Of all his hearers, perhaps few could enter more entirely and more heartily, into the spirit of his application of the words which he had made the

subject of his address, than myself. Those words had but a short time before penetrated into the depths of my own heart, and filled my whole soul with humble and adoring love. I had met with this passage in the Life of the godly Charles, of Bala, and the words had left an impression, never I trust to be effaced ; the passage is this—‘The following words have been much impressed on my mind of late, “This man receiveth sinners.” The most invaluable words ! Though I should have been presumptuously confident, and hypocritically religious all my days, yet these words take me in, now, in such a manner, as to leave me no room to escape. For ever blessed be the Lord, for Jesus Christ ! I am sure I find Him precious to my soul. Had I the same view of myself, of my guilt and sin, which I have now, without some little discovery of Christ, as constituted by the Father an all-sufficient Saviour, I should, in a degree, feel the misery of the inhabitants of hell. It is heaven on earth,’ he soon after adds—‘to live to Christ. It is heaven above to be for ever *with Him*.’

The words of the preacher came sweeping over the chords of my heart, which had so

lately trembled beneath the same thrilling words, and now every chord again responded to them. "This man receiveth sinners."

Was there a wretched sinner present who caught and clung to this scripture with a more eager, a more earnest grasp, than myself? It was indeed—and I deeply felt it—"a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I was chief." All around me were surely—so I fervently hoped and prayed—clinging to the same assurance, but the words had produced an insulating effect upon me. Was not I, in my own eyes, the chief of sinners? and did not the fact, which I, by the Holy Spirit, was enabled to realize for myself, pierce and penetrate into the very depths of my soul. Had not my own sin, my own base, vile ingratitude to Him, who suffered all for me, made me the most miserable wretch on earth; and yet had not the love of that dying Redeemer, that divine and ever-living Mediator, filled my heart with joy? Was ever love like thine, O most gentle and most gracious Jesus! Thou man of sorrows! Thou, of whom it has been so finely said, that "Sorrow was thine element, because sin

was ours ;" it was in this humbled, softened, penetrated frame, that I also hung upon the words of that most persuasive preacher.

"Then drew near unto Him," he said, "all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him."

"Imagine," he added "such a congregation as is described in these few words. Elsewhere we find publicans associated with one particular class of sinners—"publicans and harlots." "*All* the publicans and sinners drew near"—a company of thieves, sabbath-breakers, drunkards, revellers, harlots, the refuse of the population of that great city, the very dregs of degraded and disgusting humanity, men and women who would have fled with terror from the approach of a police officer. Behold, they gather together, they collect in groups, they stand, they draw near, they hearken to the words of Jesus ! Instead of repelling such creatures from Him, instead of withdrawing Himself from such a wretched company, and receiving with complacency the more respectable members of the community, behold, He "receives sinners." Never man recoiled from the touch of contamination with such purity as this man : never man was so "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, as this man : yet see—" this

man receiveth sinners." The conclusion of the sermon was extremely touching.

"And what a glorious thing it is, my dear brethren, to set this truth before men—to see the poor trembling creatures astonished by the kindness with which the gospel addresses them. I have seen such : I have seen such persons as are here described,—“publicans and sinners,” followed into their haunts of vice by a minister of the gospel—not to be upbraided because of their transgressions (Ah, he mistakes his office who upbraids such sinners!)—but to be addressed with kindness, to be astonished by the love and tenderness of Christ’s ambassador, telling them, ‘I did not come to find fault with you ; nay, nay, do not mistake me, do not be offended and drive me from your cellar or your garret in anger : I came not to reprove your vices : nay, I came to tell you that God loves you, just as you are : He does : He “so loved” a world like you, that He gave His Son to die for it : now look unto Him ; believe, and live.’ Brethren, I have seen many a rugged brow softened by such treatment. I have seen many a hardened sinner, ready on the first appearance of the visitor to turn away with a harshness of spirit that would have revolted

from rebuke, induced to look up, induced to raise his eyes by a kind tone of voice addressed to him, and on seeing a kind expression of countenance also, I have seen the tear start into that eye unused to weep. I have seen, in some of our manufacturing districts, the filthy cheek, where the smoke had been long gathering, and that was unused to be washed, furrowed indeed with the trickling tears ; I have seen that man relenting under the gentle tenderness of a manifesting of Christ's love to him and to his family, until to hide his emotion under the address of the ministering visitor, he has clasped one of his children to his bosom and hid his face in his child's clothes, that he might avoid the observation of the kind friend who was addressing him. Yes, and I have seen a whole family melt with tears upon such an occasion ; I have seen the wife's ardent anxiety that he might be reclaimed from his evil ways, and that the house of God, instead of the scenes of vice might be his haunt on the Lord's day. I have seen her drop on her knees in a kind of rapture, with the instantaneous ejaculation, "Oh, God ! hear the minister's prayer." Oh, we want to multiply such scenes as these."

I have attempted to give some idea of parts of that remarkable sermon ; but it is impossible to do justice to the simple and touching scene which he brought before us ; it was truth, it was nature ; it needed nothing, and it would have gained nothing from any ornament of man's eloquence. It was evidently the genuine effect produced by the faithful preaching of one, who was determined not to know any thing among his hearers, save Jesus Christ and him crucified ; one who was honoured of God, because his speech and his preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom ; but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. The love of Christ, shed abroad by the Holy Spirit, in his own heart—was the sweet and powerful constraint which had urged him to speak of that love with such persuasive winningness to the hearts of others.

CHAPTER V.

GEORGE MANLY.

I received a strange message one evening—
“If you please, Sir, you must come immediately, for George Manly has been and hanged himself.” In answer to my anxious questioning, I was told, that the poor fellow had been discovered in time to save his life, and had been cut down. I set off immediately. George Manly dwelt in one of a set of small and miserable hovels at the upper end of the town. He was a frank, open-hearted man. When almost a youth, he had left H—gh, and gone to sea. He had formed an attachment to a young woman who was then, perhaps, modest, and worthy of his affection. But during his absence, which lasted several years, she had become an abandoned character ; and

was, when I knew her, a plausible, fawning woman, peculiarly unsuited to the plain manly sailor, who had made her his wife. His fine intelligent features, and firmly knit frame, his kind disposition, and frank address, had, doubtless, pleased her ; and, probably, his early recollections led him to forgive the life she had led, and to hope the best. But she was idle, bold, and dirty, and was a great trial to him. They had been united for some years, if one can apply the word united to such a marriage. Her temper and her tongue were a perpetual worry to him, and his home was made, by her untidy habits, a miserable abode.

It was in the depth of an unusually severe winter, and the poor fellow had been for some time out of work, and had suffered much for want of food. He was not one to complain of his own wants, and he kept his sufferings to himself. His wife and children had food, and I fear his privations were little thought of. What were the particular acts or words which had driven him to the deed of desperation which he had attempted, I did not learn, but it seemed that he had been exposed to a more than ordinary worry of irritation, his

usual calmness had given way ; and though half stupified by cold and hunger, and his brain confused, his wretchedness had seemed to him beyond endurance ; and, weary of his life, he had left her without speaking a word in reply, and shut himself up in an empty chamber, where he was found insensible and almost gone. But medical aid was near at hand, and life was providentially recalled.

He had retreated from the busy throng of neighbours, to the room, or rather hovel, consisting of a single room, occupied by his wife's sister ; and I knew, without being told, that he was there, by a crowd of idle boys and girls who were peering in at the windows to indulge their curiosity, and stare at the man. I drove them all away and opened the door, closing it immediately that I might be alone with him. His back was turned to me ; he neither moved nor spoke, but sat staring vacantly on the wretched fire, like one lost in the bewilderment of his own thoughts : and I had sat down beside him, and spoken, before he knew or noticed my entrance. But at the sound of my voice he aroused himself and seemed pleased to see me. I soon perceived that he was not then in a state to be ques-

tioned, or spoken to on the awful sin he had committed. He was too exhausted both in mind and body to bear more than the few kind words which I spoke before I left him ; which I did for a very short time. I sent immediately to my own house for a basket of meat and bread, and some beer ; and when my messenger returned, a table was spread, and he and his family, who were all nearly in a famishing state, were seated at a comfortable meal. Just as they commenced eating, the aged mother of poor George Manly, whose weakness and lameness had prevented her for years from walking up the street in which she lived, came hobbling to the door, supported by her stick ; her face wild with horror and anxiety from the exaggerated report which had reached her ; for she had heard that he had hanged himself, and she had not heard that he was still alive. Her joy was great, and found relief in tears, at the sight of her beloved son ; but very naturally, and very injudiciously, she began to ask him how he could have done such a dreadful thing, till I put a stop to her remonstrances and reproaches by leading her to a seat, and setting a plate of food before her, and insisting on her eating.

I stood at the head of the table and distributed the meat and bread, and as I looked round upon them, I could not help wondering to myself at the appetite of the poor old creature, who evidently enjoyed the good fare before her. Poor George was the only one whom I was obliged to persuade to eat, but I prevailed with him, and after he had eaten and drunk, he appeared like another creature. One of the children was the first to rise from the table, and he went up to his mother and whispered something in her ear. She however continued eating, and merely shook her head. The whispered request—for such it was—was repeated, and the child, accustomed to have his own way, and to conquer by his teasing importunity—was not to be repulsed. At length the woman looked up at me, and said, with a whining Tone, ‘the poor child wants his kite and he is afraid to go and fetch it, for he left it in the room where his poor father hanged himself, but he says if it is left there all night the rats will gnaw it ; but he is afraid to go there by himself.’ I saw from the look of agony upon the father’s face, that his spirit winced under his wife’s words, and I took the poor fellow away to the sister’s cabin, where I had

found him. I closed the door against all intruders. He was now able to listen to me, as in a few kind words I sought to set before him the awful character of his sin in the sight of God. I first led him to converse with me on his sea-faring life ; and he listened to me and spoke as he had always done on former occasions, with respect and attention. The subject I had chosen roused and interested him, and in answer to my enquiries, he was soon describing to me the perils and the escapes of many a stormy night. " Had he not," I asked, " sometimes almost given himself for lost in some tremendous gale ? " He had. " Had he not worked at the pumps for hours, and climbed the rigging, and strained every nerve, and made every exertion that human strength was capable of, in his struggles to save the life of himself and the lives of those around him ? " He had. " Had he never thanked God when the storm was over, and the ship no longer pitched and reeled in the maddened element, and the sea no longer broke over her, and the lovely light of the morning returned, and all danger was over ? " He had. " And for what had he thus toiled and struggled ? Was it not for that very life which His great

and gracious God has so often, and so mercifully spared ? And now what had he been doing on shore, when safe from every danger ; what but yielding like a coward to the troubles which that same gracious God had sent to try him ; and owing to the words of a weak and teasing woman's voice, given himself over to despair. Had he not been throwing away the life, not only of his body, but of his immortal soul—that body, and that soul, for which his Saviour bled, and suffered, and died ? Had he not indeed been wantonly throwing away that very life which, when in peril, had appeared to him so precious, that he had put forth every power which God had given him, to save it ?” The poor fellow felt keenly the force of this argument, and deeply humbled, and contrite for the sin which he had committed—to which his eyes were now clearly opened, he confessed with tears, his guilt and his ingratitude. Together we knelt down to ask God to pardon, for our blessed Redeemer's sake, his grievous offence, and to thank Him for that mercy by which he had been so graciously spared from the crime of self-murder.

CHAPTER VI.

PENITENCE.

"Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler, the snare is broken, and we are delivered." Psalm cxxiv. 7.

"ONE shall be taken, and the other left." Such was the declaration of our Lord. Such is the fact with regard to the state of many, nay, of all ; for the lost and the saved make up but two parties. We have individual instances of this which are too remarkable to be passed over. The following is one—it appears to me of peculiar interest.

There was a young man in H—gh, to whose bed-side I was called. He was very ill, and suffering intense pain from some affliction of the limbs, which confined him to his bed. I did not go to him, for I could not ; I had gone to visit another sick person. A very dear

friend, a brother minister, was staying with me at the time, and hearing the message that was sent to me, he set off, without delay, to visit the sick man, kindly taking my place. It was a bleak, dark night, at the beginning of spring, and he groped his way down a narrow alley to the miserable hovel, a single room on the ground-floor, in the yard at the end of the alley. There lay the wretched man on the bed, from which he was never to rise, attended by his wife, the person who had brought the message. They were persons of bad character, in the very depths of poverty, and they had sent for me, hoping, naturally enough, to obtain food and money. There was, alas, no desire for spiritual instruction, no thirst for spiritual consolation. The beloved friend who visited them, was a faithful servant of our blessed Lord, a man of peculiar gentleness; but plain, searching and uncompromising in his dealings with those whom he thus visited; kind even to tenderness to the sinner, but unsparing to the sin. He felt deeply for the distress and suffering which he witnessed, but far more deeply for the ignorance and unconcern of the poor sufferer. From that night he was a constant

attendant beside the pallet of the sick man. I also went, but less frequently, for we looked upon the man as his special charge, and I had too many other sick persons to visit in that large and crowded parish not to avail myself gladly of his valuable assistance. There he passed many an anxious hour, reading the word of life to that unhappy, but utterly careless man, stating with great plainness of speech the only way of salvation through the blood of our Divine Redeemer, entreating him with all affection and earnestness to receive the message of His wonderful love ; praying beside him that he might be brought to know his own vile and sinful state before God, and to seek for pardon and acceptance through our Lord Jesus Christ. The bodily wants of the wretched couple were supplied, and their comfort attended to from that night.

But all our efforts, so far as we could judge, were unavailing. The poor man died after a few weeks,—which might have proved a season of great blessedness to him—in the same ungodly unconcern in which he lived.

But the word of God does not return to him void,—it invariably prospers in that to which He sends it. The seed which sometimes seems

to fall by the wayside, has been found to have fallen into the honest and good ground, that is, into a heart prepared by the great husbandman of spiritual things, to receive it. Such was the case on this occasion. It happened that a few days after the first visit of my brother minister, I received a message from a young woman, who, I was told, intreated me to come to her. I learnt that she was a poor unhappy girl of abandoned character—one who had forsaken the path of modesty; but I did not hesitate to go to her. I found that her lodging was a small room, the door of which opened into the entrance of the same alley, at the end of which we had found the sick man before mentioned. She was looking anxiously for my coming, yet ashamed to see me. On entering the small mean chamber, I saw a young girl of pleasing appearance and gentle manners. She said but little at first, but the tears trickled down her face, as with a trembling voice she timidly spoke of her mode of life, and explained to me her reason in asking me to come to her. It seemed that on the evening when my friend had gone to visit her sick neighbour, her door had been partly open, and she had seen him pass by on his

way thither. She had perhaps been struck by his appearance, and by the circumstance of his coming thither at that late hour ; and after watching his steps till the door of the hovel at the end of the alley closed upon him, impelled by idle curiosity, she had stolen to the door, and stood there to listen, in order to discover the object of his visit. There she stood, the unseen hearer of all that he said. There she continued standing, for she felt that she could not leave the spot, while those affecting words sounded in her ears, and sunk into her heart. He spoke of the vile and sinful heart of every fallen creature, and she felt that he described her own heart. He spoke of the state and the doom of the lost sinner, and she felt that he was speaking of her own lost state. He dwelt on the love of Christ to the wretched sinner, and of His power and willingness to forgive the very chief of sinners, and she felt that there was hope—some faint, sweet hope—of forgiveness, even for such a wretch as she knew herself to be. When he rose up to depart, she fled back with quick and noiseless steps to her own poor chamber, to weep in agony over her own sin, and to pray for that forgiveness of which she

had then first heard. But again and again she watched for his coming; and whenever he came, she followed to the door of the sick room, and there took her stand, listening with intense and eager attention to every word of his kind earnest voice. But she did not send for him, nor did she ever, I believe, exchange a word with him.

It was an affecting sight to see in that young heart-broken girl, the same spirit as that of the gaoler of Philippi, when he came trembling—when he said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” That change, which is as life from the dead, had, I trust, been wrought in her; and He who had begun the wondrous work, gave her more grace to enable her to stand firm and faithful to Him. She never went back, nor looked back. Poor girl! she had been the victim of a profligate man, in whose service her mother had been living as housekeeper, and in whose household she had also served. She was then a child of fifteen. But the heartless brute had soon forsaken her, and she had shared the common fate of such victims, and had at length taken her place among the poor despised prostitutes of the common street. Ellen T——, was scarcely

nineteen when I first saw her, and still retained her youthful bloom, for she had not yet suffered from want or sickness. She had begun, however, to look with loathing and disgust upon her way of living. She entreated me to place her, if possible, in the service of some respectable family—but I was obliged to tell her plainly, that she must not expect to be received into any family, without a character. I spoke to her of a well-known and blessed asylum in London, for penitents like herself, and she earnestly implored me to obtain admittance for her there. I wrote without loss of time to the excellent matron, and begged that her case might be submitted to the committee. While waiting for a reply to my application, I sought out her mother, who had unwillingly, it seemed, given her up as a lost creature; and I wrote to her only brother, who was a soldier, and absent with his regiment in another part of England. From her mother, and not from herself—for she said little on the subject—I learnt the sad story of her seduction. She gladly concurred with me in my plan for her daughter's immediate removal from H——gh.

I was struck by the readiness which the poor

girl shewed to follow my advice even on points which were comparatively of slight importance. I had spoken, on one occasion, on the impropriety of her style of dress, particularly the loose and flaunting sleeves, and the rows of beads that she wore. The next time I saw her, she was wearing an old dress of the commonest description, and was busily employed with her scissors and needle in altering her gown to the plain fashion of modest women in her sphere of life. The rows of beads had also disappeared. She went to the Female Penitentiary at Pentonville, and there I sometimes visited her. Her conduct, while there, was irreproachable ; and at the expiration of the usual sojourn of two years in the institution, she was placcd in service in the family of a highly respectable tradesman in London. Her master and mistress were an elderly couple—pious, kind-hearted persons, who kept no other servant. They took a real interest in her welfare, and they treated her rather as their child than as a servant.

It was three or four years from the time of her leaving the penitentiary. I was in London, and when passing through Wells Street from Oxford Street, a young woman suddenly

crossed the street and seized my hand, expressing, with hurried words, and smiling looks, her joy at meeting me again. I stared with astonishment at the extraordinary greeting of the stranger, for such she seemed to me. I saw before me a person, whose sweet and modest countenance, and quiet style of dress, were very pleasing, but of whom I had no recollection ; but before I could tell her that she had made some mistake, and that I was not the friend she took me for, my name was on her lips, and she said, she found I had forgotten poor Ellen T——. She told me that she was the happy wife of an honest, excellent young man—a journeyman in the employment of her dear master and mistress, that she had been married two years, and that there could not be a kinder, better husband, than her's. They were well off in the world, she said, for his earnings were thirty shillings a week, and he was a sober, industrious man. My delight was now, perhaps, as great as that of poor Ellen's. I felt but one drawback, the fear that her husband had not been made acquainted with her former mode of life ; but this fear was soon removed. Every thing had been honestly told him before she had accepted his offer of marriage.

It was not many weeks after the departure of Ellen T—— from her native town for the Penitentiary, that on coming out of H—gh Church one morning, after some occasional service, I found another young woman of the same class waiting to speak to me in the church-yard. Her looks were bold, and her manner abrupt, but she seemed in earnest, when she asked if I would send her up to the place where Ellen was. She wished, she told me, to lead a new life, and to get away from her bad companions. My mind misgave me, not as to her sincerity, but I could not help fearing that the good purposes of the present time might not stand. I could not feel exactly satisfied, and yet I could not think that I should do well to refuse her what she asked. I found however, on applying to the Penitentiary at Pentonville, that there was no vacancy for her at that time, but I was recommended to seek admission for her at another excellent asylum—"The Guardian."

After much serious and searching conversation—warning her against taking so important a step in her own strength, or in lightness of mind—I agreed to send her there. She was indeed fully bent on going, and she went, and

was admitted. I was not surprized some short time after, on hearing from the matron, that Ann was unsettled and wished to leave the asylum, and that though they were desirous to befriend her, the committee could not detain her against her will, or permit her, by staying, to unsettle the other young women. A letter came also from Ann to me, filled with complaints of her unhappiness, and anxiety to return to H——gh.

I thought of her with a heavy heart. My hopes of her reformation had been faint from the first, but now they died away ; I began to look upon her return to her former sinful life as a settled thing, and I feared that her last state would be worse than her first.

How wonderful are the ways of God ! Another letter came from her. She had become a new creature. I wish I could find that letter, I have it still, but it has been mislaid, and I cannot attempt to recal the artless language in which she wrote. She told me that on the last Lord's day, she had assembled with the other inmates of the asylum for the services of the day ; she was in her usual cold and dissatisfied state. But the sermon of the chaplain had gone to her heart, and she wrote as one

whose spirit was totally changed. She no longer wished to leave the shelter of the quiet home to which she had been admitted, but entreated to be permitted to remain. She had become deeply sensible of her own sinfulness, and of the advantages she enjoyed ; and her heart was full of thankfulness to her God, and to her true friends. There she did remain one of its humblest and most pious inmates. I saw her once again, but she never came back to her native town. An arrangement had been made by Government, to send out a certain number of young women to Van Diemen's land, to be engaged as female servants to the colonists on their arrival there. A selection was made from "The Guardian," of the most respectable of its inmates, and the offer was set before them. Ann K—— earnestly requested to be allowed to make one of the party, and she wrote to me to ask my approval, and to beg that I would inform her relations, that she hoped to be chosen to accompany the young women who were about to sail for Van Diemen's Land, and if chosen, that she had decided to go. I was shocked to find that her aunt and uncle determined to do every thing in their power to prevent her

going. They wrote to her, and she sent me their letter. It was a strange production, and in it they urged upon her every reason they could imagine to dissuade her from her purpose. Among others, I remember, they informed her that the ground of that foreign land, was covered with nothing but snakes and brambles. But they were not satisfied with writing, they determined to go up to London, and bring her back with them. To this Ann at first strongly objected. She dreaded their influence upon herself, and she feared lest they should conduct themselves in an unbecoming manner towards her beloved friends at the institution.

“ Let them come, Sir,” she said, afterwards, in a letter to me, “ I would wish them to come. They will not perhaps believe that I really wish to go, till they hear it from my own lips; and I shall have an opportunity—the last and only one I may ever have—to speak to them about their own state—let them come, if you please, and let them see me.” They did go—but notwithstanding all their arguments to the contrary—Ann resolutely refused to see them except in the presence of the matron; and then with much affection and

meekness, but with great plainness of speech, she told them what God had done for her own soul, and she entreated them to pray for grace in the name of her blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, that they might be enabled to turn from their evil ways, and to become as happy as she was, in believing that God had for Christ's sake, forgiven her all her sins, and washed her in the precious blood of His own Son. They were persons of loose character, and their chief objection, it was feared, was, that having shared in the profits of the prostitution of poor Ann and her younger sister—the hope of their gains would be partly gone if Ann left the country, and if her reformation continued. Her sister, who afterwards sent for me when in a dangerous illness, appeared, while her illness lasted, to be a broken-hearted penitent; but she recovered to sink to lower depths of sin and profligacy, and I often saw her flaunting about the streets in open day, her bold but handsome features brightened with rouge, and her fine person decked out in the gayest silks and other ornaments.

Ann sailed for Van Diemen's land, and we heard of her arrival, and of her marriage

to a respectable farmer with some property there.

Before the ship sailed from these shores, the party of young women, of whom Ann was one, were visited by a Christian gentleman who was much interested in the scheme of sending them out as emigrants; he was brother-in-law to the admirable Mrs. Fry. "He wrote to me," as he said, "at the particular request of a young woman named Ann K——, late of H——gh, who begged him to inform me of her happy state of mind, and to thank me again and again for my kindness to her;" and he added, "that he could not refrain from letting me know, how much he had been struck by the sweet and modest propriety of this young woman, whose very countenance seemed to reflect the inward peace which God had given her." It was a marvellous change! but the ways of our God are always marvels of goodness, and power, and grace. I could scarcely have believed in the change, except on such testimony, for, as I have before said, the countenance of poor Ann had once been remarkable for its bold and even bad expression.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TEACHER TAUGHT.

“THERE was much that was very good in that sermon,” said a friend of mine, as we walked home together from Church. “The views of the preacher, as to doctrine, are defective, but he is evidently in earnest. It would be well for that young clergyman, if some good Aquila or Priscilla were to take him and expound unto him the way of God more perfectly.” My friend was a layman, but he spoke in kindness, willing to approve all that was really commendable in the preacher. He was, though a layman, far better acquainted with the divine truths of the gospel than the man under whose teaching he had been sitting. Such a fact may not be allowed in the present day, by some who seem to suppose that there is necessarily some mysterious infalli-

lity conferred by the mere ordination and office of a clergyman ; but this assumption is apt to be denied by those who excel as much in vital godliness, as in true wisdom. The truth is, that our Church gains nothing by such assumptions. The breath of her real life is not in her forms, but in the identity of her doctrines with the pure word of God, and the faithfulness of her ministers to those doctrines. If the preacher is one who rightly divides the word of truth, and thus proves himself to be a well-instructed scribe, giving to every one of his hearers their portion of meat in due season, his authority is unquestionable, and his sermons must tend to edification. But if his views are confused, and if his statements want the fulness, and the strength of body, belonging to the new wine of the gospel, it is well for his hearers that they should be men, who like the Bereans of old—search the Scriptures daily, that they may learn whether the words of the preacher are in agreement with the word of the Lord God. It is well for him also, if there be found among those hearers, some who may, with the meekness of wisdom, stand to him instead of an Aquila and Priscilla. It was well for Apollos, “an

eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures," that there were found among his hearers, those godly and faithful persons, who, while they were willing to hear him, were both willing and able, to take him unto them, and out of the riches of their own clear and experimental knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, to expound unto him the way of God more perfectly. And yet Apollos appears to have been by office, a preacher of the gospel ; and his instructors were, one of them a woman ; and both of them by their occupation, it would seem, mere tent-makers. I am well aware that it may be objected, that every Jew was obliged to learn a trade, and that the great apostle Paul, was himself of the same craft, and on that account abode with them, and wrought with them as a tent-maker. But it appears to me, on a careful consideration of the passages, in which these holy persons are mentioned, that their calling was not that of preachers ; but that they were simply, like many of the pious laity of the present day, thoroughly instructed, under the teaching of the Spirit and the written word, in the way of godliness ; and even if it were granted that Aquila had received a commis-

sion from the Lord to preach the gospel, this could not apply to Priscilla, and yet they are spoken of together as the joint instructors of Apollos.

I speak the more feelingly, on this subject, because I have myself experienced the benefit of such godly counsel. I record with much pleasure, a debt of gratitude, which I owe to one, who in the early days of my own ministry, had the faithfulness to take me aside, and in a spirit of affection and meekness, spoke to me of a vital defect in my preaching. "You preach Christ crucified to us, Sir," he said, "with plainness. You preach Christ as our only Redeemer, and shew us that there is salvation in no other. You set Him forth as being the wisdom of God and as the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth—but there you stop—you stop short, and leave us without a word of that doctrine which can alone teach us how the preaching of Christ crucified is to be realized and applied. You say nothing to us of God the Holy Spirit, by whose influences God the Son is really made the power of God unto salvation to our souls, for "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

I recall, as far as I am able to do so at this distance of time, those faithful words. I cannot say that I was altogether pleased with that excellent friend at the time. I was young, and youth is often self-confident and impatient of reproof; but his words were the truth, and could not be gainsayed. They sunk into my heart, for they commended themselves to my conscience. I have never forgotten, I trust, the impression which, under God, they made upon me, and that impression has not only been abiding, but has deepened with every year that has passed. Those to whom I have been permitted to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, have I trust, experienced the benefit of that true friend's counsel to his minister. Alas, the truth of his assertion may be seen too often in the pages of some of our popular sermons, published twenty years ago; and I fear that in the preaching of some excellent men at the present day, it will also be found, that on this point a sermon which might be unexceptionable in other respects, is sadly defective; and yet we are living under what may be termed especially the dispensation of the Holy Spirit; and are required so to preach Christ crucified that we

may do so "*in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.*"

But useful as the admonition of a Christian friend may be, who speaks with the wisdom, and the faithful affection of an Aquila, there is a higher teaching than that of man, which every minister must seek, and receive, if he would himself attain to a vital apprehension of the doctrines which he is commissioned to preach. His conference must not be with flesh and blood, but with the Lord God. In the light which the Holy Spirit reveals, and the power which the Holy Spirit imparts, he must see and he must preach the doctrines and the precepts of the inspired word.

"I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man, for neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. But when it pleased God to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among (men) immediately, I conferred not with flesh and blood." How heartily do I respond to these inspired words of the illustrious Apostle! I am deeply convinced that the humblest, as well as the highest, minister of the gospel of the grace of God, must learn, and can only learn, how to

obtain wisdom for the instruction and edification of his own soul, and how to preach for the instruction and edification of the souls of the flock committed to his charge, through this inward revelation spoken of by the Apostle. It is a subject of heartfelt thankfulness to me to have been thus enabled to receive and to expound to others the vital doctrines of the inspired word.

I well remember the way in which, for some considerable time, I perverted the great doctrine of justification—the unscriptural way, in which, after setting forth that doctrine in the words of the Holy Scriptures, I marred and spoiled the simple grandeur of the doctrine as it stands in the Scriptures, by my explanations and attempted corrections of, what then appeared to me, its dangerous tendencies. I was, alas, profanely attempting to be wiser than the wisdom of God!

I well remember also—it was at R——y—my state of mind, when I discovered the awful mistake I had made, and the perplexity, amounting even to agony of mind, in which I continued for many, many days, till I was graciously enabled to apprehend the truth as it is in Jesus.

I turned over rapidly or slowly the pages of many volumes, for instruction on this point of almost paramount importance. I pored into them. I devoured them with avidity. I saw the doctrine plainly stated in words which are now easy of comprehension ; but the veil was upon my heart—I could comprehend nothing. I knew that I was wrong, and that those statements were right ; but I could not, and I did not receive them. At last, on my knees, with my bible open before me—my eyes blinded at times with tears—my heart full to agony, praying earnestly and unceasingly to the Lord God for light, waiting upon the Lord for His teaching, observing Sir Isaac Newton's celebrated rule in his philosophical discoveries—that is, keeping the subject ever before me—considering it quietly, thoughtfully, patiently—at last I repeat, after many days, this great and vital doctrine seemed as it were, to emerge in the clear brightness of Divine illumination, upon the darkness of my mind ; and I saw it in all its glorious simplicity. From that time it has seemed to me easy of comprehension, so easy, that I have felt that the faith of a little child might receive it ; and truly it is this child-like disposition of mind, this child-

like and confiding faith that he needs, who would receive, and does receive this great doctrine—this “test of a standing or a falling ministry.” Thus I was enabled to receive and to embrace it, and to preach it, even as I had been taught. And now I wonder not, though I grieve, when I see the remarks which I too often meet with, on this great and fundamental doctrine, in the volumes of some highly educated men, clergymen who have gone over to that corrupt Church where this doctrine is not taught, but formally rejected and denied.

It may be useful to others to mention here, that after I had been thus enabled to comprehend and embrace the doctrine of justification by faith, those books in which I found most edification, after the word of God, were “Hopkins on the Covenants,” “Witsius on the Covenants,” and Hooker’s “Sermon on Justification,” to which I may add a volume of Mr. Simeon’s, given to me by that excellent man himself, and highly valued by me, not only for its contents, but for the donor’s sake. With reference to this doctrine of Justification by Faith, I could easily bring forward an illustration, proving that so far from tending, as its unscriptural objectors might assert, to

licentiousness, it is the one great incentive unto practical godliness. But I cannot feel at liberty, out of regard for the living, to speak of its influence upon the life and the happiness of one who received it in all its scriptural entireness, a short time previous to the termination of his mortal course, a course of singular uprightness and moral loveliness. He found that a life, which has appeared almost blameless to others, was unable to afford him any solid peace by its retrospect: and it was not until divinely taught, that we are justified freely by His grace through faith which is in Christ Jesus, that he had peace with God, and was enabled to depart in perfect peace, every doubt removed, and all fear exchanged, for the full assurance of hope.

The importance of the doctrine of Justification by faith only, can scarcely be too highly estimated in these present times; first, because it is peculiarly the great and essential doctrine of the dispensation under which we live; because also it is the prominent doctrine which marks the wide distinction between the Romanist party and all Protestant churches; and lastly, because this was the doctrine plainly set forth by the great Apostle,

in those remarkable words, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,*" * when he gave that authoritative answer to the demand of an alarmed conscience, earnestly desiring to be satisfied upon the only subject that an alarmed conscience feels to be of any importance, that is, the answer made by God's ambassadors to a sinner, who in an agony of newly-awakened terror for his soul, demands of them, "*What must I do to be saved ?* "

* The Bishop of Ossory's Sermons on Justification by Faith only.

CHAPTER VIII.

MISSIONS AND MISSIONARY SOCIETIES.

WHERE we meet with much prejudice against any thing that is good, we may take it for granted that there is much ignorance on the subject. Ignorance may, in fact, be termed, the mother of prejudice. I well remember my own vague notions on the subject of missions and missionary societies, and the opinions which I presumed to hold, and sometimes to hold forth, when first I entered the ministry. A strange, unsubstantial vision, sometimes floated across my brain of a set of poor narrow-minded fanatics ; men of inferior education, and vulgar manners—half hypocrites, and half bigots, whose objects were chimerical, and whose language was cant—who were expending other people's money to en-

gage in a work in which it was impossible for any man to succeed : but which God could alone undertake, and would accomplish in his own time—a work with which *I* could have nothing to do. These notions were strengthened from time to time by the observations I was accustomed to hear from men whom I met with in society, gentlemen of intelligence and education ; urbane and even courteous when speaking on worldly subjects ; but sarcastic even to bitterness on the question of missions and missionaries. How often, for instance, have I heard the remark made by clear-headed, sensible men at my father's table, that not a convert had ever been made to Christianity, and that not a convert ever would be made ; that there were, indeed, a low, miserable set, a sprinkling here and there of natives who had no caste, and no character, and who had conformed to Christianity only for what they could get by it. If an objection were raised, or a question were asked, which implied a doubt as to the correctness of their conclusions, this would be the answer : “ Sir, I have been in India, and I speak of what I know.” I, for my part, heard these remarks with little or no interest at the time ; but

they insensibly acquired an influence over my mind, and, if I could be said to form an opinion at all on such matters, I should say that I condemned and despised everything connected with missionary enterprises. The delusion was not dispelled when, a youth of eighteen, and about to go up to college, I had the privilege of an interview with a truly eminent missionary. My father told me one evening, that he had made an engagement for me to call on the following morning upon Dr. Buchanan. "He has promised me," said my father, "to examine you, and to give you some advice respecting your college life." I was anything but pleased to hear of this engagement ; but my father was not one to be disobeyed, and I went, though with an unwilling mind. I shall never forget the impression which I received of the meek and holy wisdom of that devoted servant of Christ, in that one short interview. I was astonished by the simplicity and the sweetness of his manners. His gentleness and kindness won their way to my heart, and disarmed all my prejudices. The only examination to which I was subjected proved rather pleasant than otherwise. He opened a Greek Testament, and asked me to read a few verses, on which he

made some short and applicable remarks. I came away, feeling that I had been with no common man: and I have never since heard his name without feeling my heart warm to it. I knew so little however about missionaries at that time, that I was not even aware that Dr. Buchanan was one, and my prejudices, born, as I said before, all such prejudices are, of a most stupid ignorance, continued in full force. Well do I remember, and I recal it to my shame, the first missionary meeting I ever attended. It was held in the theatre at the well-known village of Barnwell, in the outskirts of Cambridge. Such was the prejudice at that time—about thirty-three years ago—against that noble-minded servant of God, the late Mr. Simeon, that when the placard announcing the missionary meeting appeared, a hand-bill was also circulated, headed, if I remember, thus :

“ Theatre, Barnwell:

THE COMEDY OF

THE HYPOCRITE.

The part of Dr. Cantwell, by the Rev. Mr. SIMEON, of King's College.

Mawworm, by the Rev. Mr. —, of Queen's College.”

&c.

&c.

&c.

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I went with a companion, not altogether with the avowed intention of ridiculing the proceedings of the meeting ; but with our minds quite awake to the perception of any thing which we might, in our foolish and profane presumption, deem absurd. We took possession of a private box immediately over one of the stage-doors ; and there, behind the gilded lattice-work, we listened to the addresses of the excellent men who conducted the meeting : and there our whispered repartees passed from one to the other during the whole of that meeting ; and there we laughed together at statements which, if I were to hear them now, would make my heart swell with emotion, and fill my eyes with tears. Our senseless ridicule was chiefly directed against three men whose names are not only in the churches, but are doubtless written in heaven. Against one of the number, because he was a man of stammering lips, and slow of speech—against another, who was a missionary lately returned from Western Africa ; and against Mr. Simeon himself, whose warm and glowing heart was full to overflowing, with love and zeal in the glorious cause which they had come to advocate. Not many years after, I learned, I thank

God, to appreciate the character of that remarkable man, to whom the University of Cambridge owes more, perhaps, than to any individual, whose name has adorned its annals. I have since often wondered at the bitterness of spirit which the mere mention of the subject of missions has elicited in persons, accustomed to pay, at least, an outward reverence to Divine things ; and could only attribute their virulent opposition to an ignorance as inexcusable as deplorable, in persons bearing the name of Christian : for what was the coming of our Lord from heaven to earth, but the mission of a Divine Messenger, not merely to one heathen land, but to an entire world lying in darkness, and dead in sin. And I have often thought, when observing the unconcern, or the contempt, with which the records of missionary exertion are regarded by very many, that it would be well to remind such persons, that the book of the Acts of the Apostles is to all intents and purposes a missionary report. Objectors to missionary meetings might, in like manner, be reminded that they are solemnly rebuked in those inspired pages, by the practice of the first devoted followers of our blessed Lord. We read

in the 14th of Acts, that on the return of Paul and Barnabas from the missionary journey, on which they had been sent forth by God the Holy Ghost,—on their coming to Antioch, “from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled—when they were come, they gathered the church together, and they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.” And thus we find also in the 21st of Acts, James and the elders of the church at Jerusalem, on Paul’s return to that city from another missionary voyage, saying to him, as if it were a thing of course that it should be so, “the multitude must needs come together, for they will hear that thou art come.” But every objector is at once silenced, and the matter set at rest for ever, by the parting words of the Lord Jesus himself, when He leaves this command, which was implicitly obeyed by the faithful men, whose missions are afterwards recorded. “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” This command must first be revoked before the imperative duty incumbent upon every christian church can be set aside.

I fully agree with Dr. Chalmers, that next to the direct preaching of the gospel, the most effectual means, under the blessing of God, which a Christian pastor can use to awaken a vital interest in the souls of his people concerning their own personal salvation, is to bring before them constantly, the report of Christian missions in heathen lands. Let this be done judiciously, and by one who himself feels the deep importance of such labours ; and it is next to impossible but that they will be led to feel for the eternal welfare both of themselves and others. Their ignorance on such subjects will, in spite of themselves, be removed ; and then their prejudices must fall. I shall not soon forget the astonishment and delight of two excellent sisters, ladies of a middle age, on their attending for a first time a missionary meeting in the town of F—— ; their newly-awakened emotions, and their expressions of surprise and admiration at all they heard ; and their sincere regret that so lengthened a portion of their lives had passed away, without their having had a conception that such events were passing in far distant heathen lands. The mind of the follower of Christ is, alas, too often occupied by the

reports of scientific researches, and various other topics in foreign lands, when its first enquiry should be ; Has the Bible been sent thither ? Has the gospel been preached ? Has the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, yet dispelled the gloom of the thick darkness natural to the heathen mind, purified the heart from its natural corruptions, gladdened the spirit of the fallen creature with the knowledge of the way of life ? Has the gospel given the unsearchable riches of Christ, in the place of the deplorable poverty of spiritual ignorance, and caused the desert to blossom as the rose ? Such enquiries are worthy the attention of immortal beings ! They enlarge the intellect, and ennoble the character. But alas, we see too often the energies of the mind wasting themselves upon subjects of comparative insignificance ; and the taste perverted by pursuits unworthy of immortal creatures. I have never met with statements so deeply affecting, or descriptions so truly sublime, as those which I have sometimes found under the despised cover of a missionary report.

The declaration of the inspired Apostle, that—“ *The salvation of God is sent unto the*

Gentiles, and they will hear it"—Acts xxviii. 28 ; is too often forgotten by those who profess to be faithful and obedient to the Redeemer whose name they bear, and to that Church, which, if really a Christian Church, must bear the distinct character of a missionary Church. The whole world is, in fact, but as one wide-spread field—from every portion of which they that are themselves the redeemed of the Lord, hear the voices of perishing, but immortal beings, calling unto them ; " Come over and help us : " that field is white already to the harvest ; and we are called upon, by our Divine Redeemer, who now speaks to us from heaven, to " pray to the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest," and to promote by every means in our power the cause of missions. If we turn to the annals of Missionary labour, we find also great encouragement from the past triumphs of the gospel, in many of the dark places of the earth, to conclude that like successes shall still attend like exertions—But after all, success is not the criterion of duty.

If, as in the case of Hans Egede, in opening up the soil of Greenland, for the seed of God's

word, the life of the Missionary may pass away without his being permitted to behold a single convert as the fruit of his unremitting labours, still the parting commission of the Lord Jesus Christ stands in all the sacredness of a command, which is enduring as the earth itself—always to be obeyed while there is one faithful, loving disciple on the earth to receive it.

And yet a large portion of the Christian world are entirely ignorant of the work that has been done, and is still progressing under the manifest grace and blessing of the Lord, in heathen lands. How often have I seen not only a frown of disapproval, but a sneer of contempt, upon many a benevolent countenance—if the subject of Christian missions has been introduced ! But I have heard also remarks, wearying from their very staleness, from the lips of those who can converse sensibly enough on other topics ! A plain statement of facts is at once the best argument, and the best answer for such opposers. Few of our congregations in civilized and Christianized England, could furnish instances of conversion so remarkable, and proofs of conversion so satisfactory, as the two following accounts.

When Brainerd preached and laboured among the savages of North America, "an old Indian conjuror, a murderer, and a drunkard, was brought, under one of his sermons, to cry for mercy to God with many tears. The work of God had assuredly commenced in the heart of that poor fallen sinner, but for many months his heart was full of wretchedness." His only reply to the questions of his affectionate pastor was, "My heart is dead, all is done, I can never help myself. I must go to hell," he said, when asked what he thought would become of him? "I asked him," said the Missionary, "if he thought it was right that God should send him to hell?" He replied, "Oh, it is right! the devil has been in me ever since I was born!" And yet, while in this afflicted state, he was anxious to hear the Missionary preach, and he seemed desirous to hear him preach the word of God every day. "I asked," said Brainerd, "why he wanted to hear me preach, seeing his heart was dead, and all was done, and that he could never help himself, but expected that he should go to hell?" Surely no livelier proof was ever given, that the rebel had become a child of God, and that the love of God had

been shed abroad in that contrite heart, by the Holy Ghost, than by the reply which he made to his faithful and loving friend—" *I would have others come to Christ—if I must go to hell myself !* " " It was remarkable," adds the Missionary, " that he seemed to have a great love to the people of God, and nothing affected him so much, as the thought of being separated from them—this seemed to be a very dreadful part of the hell to which he thought himself doomed ! " His heart was at length filled with admiration, comfort, satisfaction, and praise to God. " In all respects," concludes the godly Brainerd, " so far as I am able to judge, he bears the marks and characters of one, created anew in Christ Jesus to good works ! "

I pass, however from the forests of America to the wild regions of Southern Africa, for the other narrative to which I alluded. It is of later date, not further back than the year 1845.

There was an aged woman, named Litsape : she had lived during the reign of four of the kings of her tribe. In the year 1835, she was baptized and enrolled among the members of the Church of Christ, and to the day of

her decease, she continued a warm-hearted, zealous, and consistent disciple of our Blessed Lord. During that period of ten years there was no part of her conduct to excite an unpleasant emotion in the minds of her teachers. "Some years ago," writes the Rev. Robert Moffat, "her only son and his wife, with whom she lived, and on whom she was dependent, left the station of Kuruman, and they employed every argument to induce the venerable woman to leave with them. Their importunity was the more remarkable, as she was almost helpless, and viewed by the heathen as a nonentity, or in their language — 'a dry old hide.' Her son and daughter, both unbelievers, still persisted in their endeavours to take her away, but nothing could induce her to alter her resolution. Her replies were noble; 'I can be happy any where if Jesus is only there; if I can only hear His voice! You tell me I shall die of hunger here; I shall trust my Saviour for that. He cared for me, He fed me, and clothed me, during many, very many years, when I knew him not, and thanked Him not! and will He not take care of me now that I love Him? You know I love Him. Leave my God, and

the people of God, for Satan ! No ! Let me die where I am, and let me die of hunger too, rather than leave the service and the people of my Saviour. He feeds my soul. I shall not die but live !’

Finding her immovable, they left her without a sigh, but other emotions possessed her soul. “You,” addressing her son and daughter, “will soon forget me, but I will not so soon forget you ; for while you sing and dance with the heathen, I shall be weeping for your souls, and praying for you, my children !” Her grand-daughter, who with her husband, Magame, were believers—took her to dwell with them, and her home was beneath their roof till she died. Her mind was ever alive to divine things, and she appeared to put the highest value on every word coming from God. She was never absent, even in the seasons of her greatest debility, from public worship. Latterly having entirely lost her eye-sight, she would totter along with a staff in one hand, and groping with the other, to hear the words of Jesus Christ. She rejoiced that the sense of hearing was still left to her, and that she could still hear her Saviour’s voice. “She always appeared,” says Mr.

Moffat, "to have her heart full of love to her Redeemer. Wherever she was, or at whatever hour of the day or night, she poured forth of the good treasure of her heart. She was all peace and contentment."

"The night before her dissolution, I remained with her several hours, expecting each to be her last on earth. I was conversing with those present about her probable age—she heard us and she spoke—'I am not old,' she said, 'I only began to live, when I first knew and loved the Saviour. My former life was a nothing—a dream. I was asleep, till a stranger came to me—it was Jesus. He cried, Awake! awake! I awoke, and beheld his hands and feet which my sins had pierced, and then I died with horror—my heart died within me. I said, 'Let the anger of the Lord destroy me, for I have slain His son.' I felt I was a murderer! I felt I was made of sin! I was not a worm, but a serpent. My heart died, I became as a corpse. The eagles of heaven saw my body—they were descending to devour it; but Jesus came again, and said, 'Live!'" I asked her, if she had any misgivings, in the certain prospect of soon entering into life, in the unseen and deathless state? She replied,

with great ardour, 'How can I doubt, when Christ has done all for me? I am not my own, I am part of his body.' I spoke of the unmingled happiness enjoyed in heaven in the society of saints and angels, 'Yes,' she added, 'but it is the presence of the Saviour that makes that happiness! Could I be happy were He not there? No.' She appeared to have no ebbs and flows of feeling. From the abounding fulness of her heart, her mouth spake. She was much in prayer. Her lamp burned with a steady flame, throwing a lustre on every thing around her, till it died away in the pure day of heaven. She was truly a brand plucked from the burning—a trophy of the power of the everlasting gospel; for she had been a sinner of no common order—a kind of priestess of the unmeaning rites of heathenism. Her faith was simple as it was sincere; and considering her great age when she was aroused to a sense of her danger, I was frequently surprized at the extent of her knowledge, and the clearness of her views on Divine subjects."

And now I would ask, reader, what think you of this last account? I, for my part, recal some of the finest passages in the works

of the poets of Greece and Rome—or in those of our own language, and I can find nothing more grand than the conceptions and the language of this aged African woman. She was a poet of the highest order, with all the simplicity of the faith of a little child.

But it is not on the lofty and imaginative grandeur of her thoughts, and of her expressive language, that I would dwell ; I would ask my reader to consider how rarely we can point out, among the members of our churches in this favoured land, to such an instance of the power of the gospel of the grace of God upon the human heart ; such clearness and fulness of vision, such vigour of faith, such heavenly peace, and such glorious assurance ! aspirations so lofty from a heart so humble !

It has been the common cant of many educated persons, to speak with contempt of the intellect of the African savage ; but their own ignorance is, I repeat, the parent of such an unworthy prejudice. Is the following description given by a native convert a proof of the inferiority of intellect in the African ? He was speaking of his former life, before he was brought to a saving knowledge of our Divine Redeemer : “ I still look back,” he

said, "on the dark and dreary road I came, with inward horror. I still see the precipices on the brink of which I trembled ; I feel as if I still heard the lion roaring at my heels ! Yes, I still shudder, when I think that I might have perished in my flight from death,—dread death,—before the glad tidings of the gospel reached these ears, and the heavenly light dawned upon my midnight path !" Again, how affecting, and how beautiful, the language of expostulation from an African chief to the Missionary !—how admirably descriptive of the enmity of the natural heart to God ! " We all love you as much as if you were our father ; and we would love you abundantly more, if you would not talk to us of that man you call Jesus ; just leave us to go on as we are." As striking is the lamentation of a heathen father, complaining to the Missionaries of the conversion of his son : " Look," said the father ; " there is my son : " he was present. " He is not my son, he is changed into another being ; I know him not. He is my heir, my first-born ; but he is lost. He is the representative of my fathers ; but he is dead." This was the lamentation over a son who had indeed been dead, but was alive again ; who

had been lost, but was found within the fold of God.

It seems to me, however, that nothing can well exceed in grandeur the following description given by Mr. Moffat, of an interview between the African chief, Macaba, and himself:—"This chief," he says, "was illustrious for war and conquest, and had become the terror of the interior. He dwelt some hundred miles beyond our Missionary station at Lattakoo. My visit to him was considered, at the time, a hazardous one, but the veteran chief received me with great respect, and treated me with much kindness. In one of my interviews with this man of war and blood, while seated among fifty or sixty of his nobles and counsellors, including rain-makers, and others of the same order; in the course of my remarks, the ear of the monarch caught the startling sound of a resurrection. "What!" he exclaimed, with astonishment, "what are these words about the dead!—the dead arise!" "Yes," was the reply, "all the dead shall arise." "Will my father arise?" "Yes," I answered, "your father will arise." "Will all the slain in battle arise?" "Yes." "And will all that have been killed and de-

voured by lions, tigers, and crocodiles, again revive?" "Yes, and come to judgment." "And will those whose bodies have been left to waste and wither on the plains of the deserts, and been scattered to the winds, again arise?" he asked, with a kind of triumph, as if he had fairly fixed me. "Yes," I replied, "not one shall be left behind." Turning to his people, to whom he spoke with a stentorian voice, "Hark! ye wise men, whoever is wise among you, the wisest of past generations, did ever your ears hear such strange and unheard-of news?" And addressing himself to one, whose countenance and attire shewed that he had seen many years, and was something more than common. "Have you ever heard such strange news as this?" "No," was the sage's answer, I had supposed that I possessed all the knowledge of the country, for I have heard the tales of many generations. I am in the place of the ancients. But my knowledge is confounded with the words of his mouth; verily he must have lived long before the period when we were born." The chief then turned and addressed himself to me, "Father," he said, laying his hand on my breast, "I love you

much. Your visit and your presence have made my heart white as milk. The words of your mouth are sweet like the honey, but the words of a resurrection are too great to be heard. I do not *wish* to hear about the dead rising again ! The dead cannot arise ! The dead shall not arise !” “ Why,” I enquired, “ can so great a man refuse knowledge, and turn away from wisdom ? Tell me, my friend, why I must not add to words, and speak of a resurrection ?” Raising his arm, which had been strong in battle, and quivering his hand, as if grasping a spear, he replied, “ I have slain my thousands, and shall they arise ?” Never before did the light of divine revelation dawn upon his savage mind—never had his conscience accused him ; no, not for one of the thousands of deeds of rapine and murder, which marked his course through a long career !

With these statements before my reader, let me claim his attention to the fact which follows. Some years ago, when residing in Kent, I was returning to my parish, after attending a Missionary meeting at the town of Maidstone. I was seated on the roof of a stage-coach. There were many passengers,

and every place was occupied. I had been sitting in silence, but my companions were conversing. The loudness of the voice of a gentleman who sat near me, drew my attention to the subject of which he was speaking. He was addressing an harangue to the passengers around us on the subject of Missions and Missionary Societies. His eye had probably been caught by the bills on the walls, giving notice of the meeting at which I had just been present. His voice was alone heard, and he was attacking all such societies in no measured terms of abuse. "You are not to suppose," he said to those around him, "that these Missionaries have ever effected any thing. I can tell you that they have never made a single convert. I am able to speak with authority on this point, for I have been in heathen countries ; and I tell you plainly, the whole thing is one gross imposture. You must not believe their tales, there is no truth in them. And as for your money," he continued, "I would not have you give a penny to such societies. I can tell you that the people in England who would draw it from your pockets, spend it on themselves. Your money never reaches those to whom it is

given." In this strain he went on ; and every one was looking at him and listening to him ; his vehemence and his loud voice rising above the noise of the carriage, had aroused the attention of all his companions. But no one among them answered him. I too was silent. I let him speak on, resolving at first to say nothing, for my spirit rose in indignation within me ; I felt that I could not trust myself to speak ; I feared that I might lose my temper, and thus, by intemperate and angry words, damage the holy cause which I earnestly desired to clear from his shameful imputations. I felt also that any reasonings of mine might only bring on an argument, which might continue unsettled till I got down from the coach, some few miles nearer London. But we have always a resource in every difficulty. I said to myself ; Such falsehoods as these assertions must not be suffered to proceed. I must speak ; and now while I still sat in silence, I raised my heart to God in earnest prayer, and besought Him to teach me how to meet the falsehoods of this violent man ; and I prayed that I might be enabled, not only to speak with wisdom, but with meekness, keeping my temper under control.

There was a pause in his speaking, and, turning to my companions with a firm and distinct voice, I said, calmly, "I beg leave to give a full and direct contradiction to every word which this gentleman has spoken to you. It is not true, and you must not believe him." He started and turned to me with a look as full of astonishment as it was of anger. "Who are you, and what do you mean," he cried, "by this attack on what I have been saying?" "I am a clergyman," I said, gravely and mildly, "and though I must beg your pardon for speaking so plainly, what I mean to say is this—that you, Sir, have not spoken the truth. I have no wish to provoke or to offend you, but I tell you gently, but decidedly, your words must not be believed on the subject of Christian Missions. You have no right to speak as you have spoken. Our fellow-passengers must not be permitted to go to their several homes, with the impression fixed upon their minds, which your words were calculated to produce; and therefore before we separate, I have felt it necessary to break the silence which I kept too long, and to give a direct and positive contradiction to every assertion which you have made." He stared

at me for a moment with amazement, and again burst forth : " Have you been in India, Sir ? let me ask you that question." " No," I replied, " I have not been in India." " Well, Sir," he said, " I have been in India ; and, therefore, as I have been in India and you have not, allow me to say, I know what I am speaking about, and speak with authority ; and you can know nothing at all about the matter, for you have seen nothing with your own eyes. An eye-witness, Sir, as I have been, can offer such testimony, and give such proof, as no other man can possibly do." I begged to tell him that, whatever he might say to the contrary, it was very clear to me that, whether in India, or in England, he was not likely to entertain a correct opinion, or to pass a fair judgment, on such a subject—that the spirit in which he spoke, bore internal evidence to the false view that he had taken, and consequently to the false descriptions which he had given. In reply to his assertion, that not one native convert had ever been made, I could assure him that facts were against him, nay, that there was at that time one well-known Indian preacher of the gospel, not merely a convert, but an ordained minister, whose

name I mentioned, Abdool Messeeh. I referred to the testimony of Schwartz, Dr. Carey, Henry Martyn, Bishop Heber, and many others ; but he only endeavoured to overpower me with loud words and violent assertions, insisting that I was mistaken, and thus injuring his own cause by his senseless denial of facts, which he could not overturn. He was now indeed just doing what I hoped he would do, upsetting, by his own want of common candour, the false opinions he had perhaps been enabled to impart to the people around us. I do not bring before my readers the details of this conversation, but I may mention, that I remember using an argument which I felt must have its weight with my other companions, even if it left no impression upon my angry antagonist. It was not indeed to him that I addressed myself, nor did I think it likely that, on so wilfully perverted a mind, any thing that I could say would carry conviction along with it ; but it might not be so with the rest of those present. They could hear reason, and they would judge for themselves. They would also discriminate between the spirit of my adversary and my own spirit, and if they saw, that with a determined and un-

shaken firmness, tempered by Christian meekness and gentleness, I withstood his virulent attacks, and defended the cause which I had at heart, shewing that it was not for argument's sake, or for victory, but for the truth that I was combatting, they would go to their several homes without sustaining that injury from which it was my earnest desire to guard them. "Though I have not been in India," I said, "I have at this moment several brothers, and some intimate friends in India, individuals to whom I am bound by no common ties of natural affection, and who would have no wish to deceive me, and no possible motive for doing so ; but if I were to hear one, or all of those beloved friends addressing you in the spirit, or with the language of this gentleman, I do not hesitate to declare, that I should say to you of their assertions, as I have said of his—You must not, my friends, believe them ; they are statements which are not true ; simply because those statements are at direct variance with well-known facts—facts which are indeed accredited by men of the most enlightened piety, and the most blameless and consistent conduct—men of the highest integrity and truth—men peculiarly fitted to form

a correct estimate, and to pass a sound, true verdict on the state of Christian Missions, and the character and conduct of Christian Missionaries. The fact that my friends had been in India, would have no more weight with me than the fact, that this gentleman has been in India. The mere circumstance, that a man has been in such, or such a place, may prove that he has been in a *position* to form a correct opinion upon the people of that place; but it can prove no more. Something more is surely required than having been in a particular place, in order to our being qualified to give a correct account of the real state of affairs in that place. Much will depend upon the bias of the man's own mind, and the class of persons he associates with in that place.

“For instance, suppose I had the charge of a quiet rural parish, beyond that ridge of lofty hills which you see rising to the right of the road. A stranger comes to that parish, a careless, ungodly man, full of prejudices against all vital religion, and all godly persons. He passes his time, while he remains there, at the public-house in the place, and he visits at the houses of a few families, the members of whom he has met with, drinking and swearing

at that public-house. From such low and degraded characters he seeks his information as to the state of the parish, and the characters of my parishioners, and on such information he forms his opinions, and takes his estimate of the godly people of the place. He never enters the house of God, he never exchanges a word with one Christian man of high and unexceptionable character in that parish; he never enters one of those lowly cottages where he might receive lessons of heavenly wisdom, and behold examples of saint-like resignation from some aged or dying follower of our Blessed Lord, contented even to thankfulness with their low estate, in the midst of poverty and disease, and all the circumstances of what the world deems wretchedness. Do you tell me that if that stranger went away and gave this report of my parish, which he had received from the class that he had associated with,—namely; that there was no true religion in the place, that the Pastor and the religious portion of his flock, were no better than a set of bigots and hypocrites; that they were not sincere, not honest in their profession of the Christian faith—that, in a word—the gospel was not faithfully preached; and that it

had produced no fruit ;—do you tell me that this report would deserve to be received ?

“ Now, supposing such a case as this, would any one assert, that the mere circumstance of a stranger’s coming and sojourning for a time in a certain place, and gathering his information concerning the work of God in the place, from a small party of opposers to that work, would be any proof that his judgment was a right one, or his estimate a fair one, as to the real state of religion among my parishioners.

“ But I would, on no account, presume to say, that I mean to liken this gentleman to the stranger whom I have supposed to have visited the quiet village beyond those hills to the right. So far from being a lover of low company, or of the pleasures of the drunkard and the profligate, I would give him full credit for being a gentleman of highly respectable character in the opinion of the world, and for associating only with persons as respectable as himself. I would bring no accusation against him, but that he may be merely what is called a man of the world, feeling no interest in those subjects which are of unspeakable importance in the eyes of godly

men, taking no pains to acquire any correct information about them, simply because, like a highly intellectual and educated man of old times, *he cares for none of those things*; and with all deference to his opinion on other subjects, about which he may be well fitted to pass his judgment,—I do maintain that, on the subject of Missions to the Heathen, he has proved that he is not qualified to speak. Facts which are, after all, the best arguments, are entirely contradictory to his assertions.”

I think I am not mistaken in saying that my prayer had been answered, and that I could read in the countenances of my companions that my words had not been spoken in vain. The impetuous antagonist of that hallowed cause, which I loved with all my heart, was silent, if not convinced. The coach however stopped, and the guard reminded me that here I was to leave them. I begged to shake hands with my opponent; and bidding farewell to him, and to my other fellow-travellers, I got down from the coach, and was soon walking towards my own home across the quiet fields in the direction of that rural parish, among the hills and lovely valleys on the right of the roadside from Maidstone to London, to

which I had alluded : not without many thoughts, and some of them thoughts of prayer, as my mind reverted to that little company who had been my fellow-passengers, not merely in that journey of a few hours, but in that portion of the journey of life ; whom I was probably never to meet again, till on that day when every man must give an account of himself to God—my fellow-travellers to eternity, among whom I had been graciously permitted to be, I trust, a witness for the Lord God, and His everlasting truth.

A few years ago, a circumstance occurred at a meeting of a Missionary society in the city of Chester, where I was present, which may be well introduced after the account I have given of the conversation on the Maidstone coach.

A stout middle-aged man entered the Town Hall, and seated himself on one of the benches there. He was apparently an officer in the navy or army, and a stranger in the city. It was soon evident to the persons near whom he had seated himself, that he had come to the meeting in no friendly spirit. Having seen the placards on the walls, in which it was announced, he seemed as if he

had purposely come with a wish to interrupt the proceedings of the evening. Without addressing himself particularly to any individual, he spoke loud enough for those around him to hear his remarks, on the statements from the platform to which they were listening ; and he appeared at times, as if almost unable to restrain his indignant anger, or the bitter contempt with which he was animated from time to time ; repeating, as he turned from side to side, " You don't believe all this I hope : I can tell you, there is not a word of truth in what they are saying." He attracted especially the notice of a Christian lady, who sat near him, and who was kept in a continual state of uneasiness ; fearing lest he should start up and interrupt the speakers, and so cause a disturbance. But she observed that by degrees, his attention was rivetted by what he heard, and that he seemed insensibly to calm down in earnest and absorbed attention, to the accounts given by a Missionary from India, the Rev. Mr. Leupholt, who was then addressing the assembly ; nay more, that at length he took out his pocket-book, and was occupied in making notes of the facts that were stated ; and perhaps no person there

present was more deeply interested in the subject of the meeting, than that now thoughtful and silent man. The very expression of his countenance was changed, and a deep impression was evidently made upon his mind by what he heard. When he rose up at the conclusion of the meeting—for he remained to the last—the lady of whom I have spoken, and who had been unable to resist watching him with increasing interest—also rose up, and notwithstanding the throng, contrived to keep close behind him till they had reached the door, where plates were held to receive the contributions of the meeting. She had seen him take out his purse, and as he dropped his donation into the plate, her eye caught the glimmer of gold—the free-will offering of a heart and a hand which had been so lately closed against the preaching of the gospel to the heathen. His prejudices were gone, his opposition had been overcome. The truth had approved itself to his conscience, and had prevailed. Much has been said against the excitement of Missionary meetings, yet what is excitement in so noble a cause, but the stirring of a revived life where all was dull and dead before !

Among the objections to Missions, I have heard the complaint that the Missionaries were often men of inferior education and vulgar manners ; a complaint which may or may not be partially true, but which if it were true, would only prove that men of education and refinement have been deplorably backward, in offering themselves for this distinguished service in the ministry of our blessed Lord. When, however, we hear so senseless a complaint, and think of the blessing which has crowned the labours of these men of inferior education and station, we cannot but be reminded of what is told us in the inspired word ! That when the chief men among the Jewish Sanhedrim, “ saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled, and took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” Acts iv. 13.

But I would ask, if there appears to be any want of refinement—refinement of the highest kind, even that of the spiritual mind, in the following pictures of the Missionary, and his family circle, from which one cherished member was to go forth a stranger to strange and distant lands ? I can vouch for the faith-

fulness of the portraiture in both instances. When the Rev. Mr. V——, of the Church Missionary Society, received his instructions before the committee at the Church Missionary house, he manifested such a lovely disposition, and expressed himself in so impressive and affecting a manner, that a gentleman present followed him out of the room, feeling desirous to obtain some information from him, respecting his family. He asked, "Have you a father living?" Mr. V—— replied, "I have." "Is your mother also alive?" He answered, "Yes." "Have you any brothers and sisters?" The answer was, "There are ten of us in family." The next question was a very natural one: "Did they give you up willingly?" Mr. V—— replied, "He trusted that he could say they did;" adding, "On the morning that I left home, we all met around the domestic altar. My father in prayer, commended me to the guidance, and keeping, and blessing of our covenant God; and when we rose from our knees, I believe that one sentiment pervaded every breast. I believe that one and all could say—We love you, our son, our brother, most tenderly; but we all love Jesus Christ far more, and are thankful that one of

our number is called to the high privilege of making known His unsearchable riches to the heathen.

When the Rev. Mr. W——, of the same society, had fully determined to go forth as a Missionary, he could not make up his mind to tell his aged father of what he was going to do, as he knew it would cost him so much to part with him ; he did tell his sister, and he met with this reply, “ My dear brother, I have often prayed the Lord of the harvest to raise up labourers, and to send them forth into his harvest, but I have never prayed, I never *can* pray, that He may send you.”

A short time before his departure, he put into the hand of the same friend to whom he had mentioned the words of his beloved sister, a letter which he had just received from his father, in answer to the one in which he had made known to him, for the first time, his intention of going forth as a Missionary to India. In the beginning of the letter were very strong expressions of affection on the part of the father for his son ; and then he went on to say in these simple and touching terms, “ If the Lord has need of you among the heathen, I dare not oppose your going

forth among them ; for I know what He has done for me. He gave His adorable Son, not merely to live for me, but to die as an atonement for my sin ! ” and he bade his son go forth with a father’s blessing on his head, declaring that as long as he lived, he would not fail to supplicate the God of all grace to be with his child, and to prosper the work of his hands. A day or two before he sailed, in a letter dated Deal, we have this description of his departure from his father’s house ; ‘Painful—most painful it was to tear myself away from my much-loved and very precious home. I could not bear the pain of leave-taking, so, rising early, I secretly withdrew.’ Through a half-open door, at the early dawn, the son stood gazing upon his aged father as he slept—and then quitted the house undiscovered, as he trusted, by any member of his beloved family—but a faithful servant-girl, who had been, as he says, in ‘happy days gone by, a pupil in my Sunday school, and God had blessed my counsels to her, saw me, and she, poor girl, hung upon me like a sister, and would not be pacified without sobbing out her tearful farewell. As to myself,’ he added, ‘my nerves, which have sometimes been braced up

to immoveable firmness, utterly gave way, and I wept, as I had never wept before. But I have not lost my best friend—our Master faithful and true, who suffers me to draw nigh to him, apportions my strength to my day, and will not leave me nor forsake me, as I trust, till He has made me more than a conqueror, through Himself who loveth me.’

This devoted missionary never returned to his native land, and to his happy home. His mortal remains lie buried beneath the burning sands of India. He died of jungle-fever, after ten days of severe suffering. The enemy of souls strove hard to shake his faith, but for some hours previous to his departure, he was permitted to enjoy the sweetest peace of mind, and in the firm faith and hope of everlasting life, through the sole merits of his Redeemer, he entered into his rest.

Let me, in conclusion, with all seriousness, urge upon those among my readers, who have hitherto been indifferent or opposed to Christian missions, that if they are really the disciples of Him, who was Himself the first Missionary, and came down from heaven to this accursed earth to seek and to save those that were lost, that the necessity of an impe-

rative duty, which they cannot neglect but at their peril, is laid upon them to come forward in this great and holy cause. Let me also assure them, from the deep conviction of my own mind, that there is not any topic more abounding in high and delightful interest, than the recorded triumphs of the grace of God, and the gospel of Christ among the benighted nations of the earth. I do not scruple to say, that the opening of the glorious subject may be almost likened to the discovery of a new world. Sweeter than the spicy odours which came wafted from the unknown shores, about to open their scenes of enchanting loveliness to the gaze of Columbus and his wearied voyagers ; sweeter—O far sweeter—the spiritual fragrance breathing from those regions where, under the light and love of the gospel of the grace of God, the wilderness rejoices and blossoms as the rose, and the land before them is as the garden of Eden.

CHAPTER IX.

THE YOUNG INFIDEL.

I HAD not been long settled at H——t, when I was told that a youth named Thomas R——n, whom I had not seen, was in a hopeless state of health, and much in need of instruction. I heard this one Saturday evening, and thinking that he had no time to lose, I set off the next day, after evening service, to visit him. His mother's cottage was in a sequestered lane near the hamlet of W——n, and by the time I reached the door, the day was fast closing in. The evening—it was in March—was unusually cold and gloomy; but the dismal gloom which had gathered upon every outward object around me, was not darker nor heavier than that which hung upon the spirit of the wretched boy whom I had

come to visit. The door was opened by his mother, who seemed pleased at my coming. I found a slight and delicate-looking youth, about sixteen years of age. Though he received me with the respectful manner of one who was evidently well-bred and intelligent, I perceived plainly enough that he had no wish to see me, or (as he afterwards told me) any minister of religion. He hung down his head, and sat without speaking, except to answer, with evident reluctance, the questions I addressed to him; but his replies were given, I could see, unwillingly, and in very few words. His mother told me that he had been in low spirits since his last walk to Market Drayton, where the doctor, whom he had consulted, after partly stripping him, had examined him, and told him abruptly that there was no human probability of his ever getting better in this world. I tried in vain to draw him into conversation, or to make him feel how fully I entered into his feelings, how tenderly I sympathised with him! He said nothing, but when I knelt down and prayed beside him, he covered his face with his hands, and the tears trickled out through his fingers.

His face was still bent down when I took leave of him, and left the cottage.

From that day, I did not fail to be a constant visitor in the little quiet chamber of Thomas R. I saw that his time in this world was short; his weakness increased daily, and his countenance was bright with the hectic colour of consumption. But sorry as I was to see him suffer, it was not the state of his bodily health which alarmed me. When I discovered the utter wretchedness of his mind, the desolation of his inward state, I began to feel the deepest anxiety about him. I read to him from the word of life, and prayed with him, and endeavoured to draw from him some answers to my earnest questions, some account of his own state; but for several days I felt that I had gained no ground with him. He was quiet and attentive, but he said nothing, he did not even raise his head to look me in the face. I have learnt from him that he was then without hope, either about this world or the world to come.

When I had won his confidence, I did not wonder at his deep dejection. Young as he was, he was an infidel, well read in the works of Tom Paine, and others of that wretched

school; and he had been a mocker and blasphemer of the holy Bible, and the blessed name of Jesus Christ. I could scarcely believe it possible that a youth hardly turned sixteen, residing among uneducated cottagers in that sequestered part of the country, should have met with such books—but the person is still alive who will have to answer to God for having put those books into the hands of that ingenuous and gentle boy, and I have no wish to expose him. The books had been read, nay studied, and he had even gone so far, that in order to strengthen himself in his arguments against the word of God, he had frequently opened the Bible with the desire of finding something to attack or ridicule in its sacred pages. He had also been accustomed at times to take one of his vile books, or some worthless novel in his hand, and put himself in the way of a simple-minded and pious dissenter, who was in the habit of walking from Drayton to H——t one day in the week, that he might shew him the book, and dispute with him, and make a mock of the grief which he betrayed on hearing the language of the wretched youth. I heard this, not

only from Thomas R., but also from the good man himself.

No words of mine can describe the utter wretchedness of mind of that poor dying boy. I did not attempt to remove it, feeling that such a work was beyond the power of any human being. But all that I could do, I endeavoured to do. I brought before him the real character of the word of God, by reading to him continually such portions of the inspired volume as seemed calculated to convey to one like himself a clear apprehension of the mind of God ; and I was as constantly on my knees beside him, endeavouring to lead his thoughts, by simple and earnest expressions of prayer, to the presence of One who is as gracious as He is glorious, as condescending as He is mighty. As long as he had strength to kneel, he knelt with me, and I believe he soon discovered the deep and affectionate interest which his sinfulness and his misery had excited in me. He was constantly in my thoughts when away from him, and my thoughts were generally turned to prayers, when they were occupied with him.

I found in this instance, as I have often, nay always found, that the only thing to be

done in such cases, after having humbly and diligently used the means He has appointed, is to wait upon the Lord. I soon learnt that I had to do, not only with one whose powers of mind were of no common order, but (what was of far higher importance,) with one who was deeply in earnest. He began to open to me his whole heart, and fearful indeed was the spectacle disclosed, of errors in principle, and their natural consequence, sins in practice. "And now, Sir," he said mournfully to me on one occasion, after having spoken to me with a plainness that shewed how precious truth had become to him, and he turned away his face as he spoke, looking the picture of shame and misery, "now that you know me as I am, I think you will never come near me again." I thought of Him whose minister I am, and whose lovely example I was called to follow, who never broke the "bruised reed," nor quenched the "smoking flax;" but though I let him see how deeply I felt for him, I did not for a moment attempt to palliate the enormity of his guilt.

We got on but slowly, for though he had often opened the Bible, during his days of dark and wilful unbelief, and, knew much of

its contents, he knew nothing whatever of the glorious scope of the word of God, and had never felt the warm effulgence which shines throughout its pages upon the heart of every simple-minded believer : and when it pleased God to answer our prayers, and to teach him to understand "the truth as it is in Jesus," he did not pass over from confusion and misery to ungrounded hopes and raptures. If he was at length enabled to believe that his sins were forgiven, he could never forget how awfully he had offended.

From the first moment that I attended him to the very last, I never heard him make one excuse for himself, or attempt, in any way to justify himself. After leaving him one day full of hope, and joy, and peace, I have found him the next with his countenance fallen, and bathed in tears, complaining that he was too unworthy to hope.

He did not merely hear me read, and then trouble himself no more with the subject ; but before I shut the book he would ask me to mark the passage for him, and I frequently found him afterwards with the Bible upon his pillow intently occupied with it. Once I found him with our Common Prayer Book, and he

told me that he had been looking very attentively over the Service for Baptism, and that of the Lord's Supper. He had been in fact searching for himself, and judging for himself, and he deplored how much he had lost, in never valuing those blessed ordinances, and not living as one for whom they had been graciously ordained by their Divine Founder.

I have tried in vain to recal the circumstances of my many interviews with Thomas R. In a short diary which I kept at that time, I find his name constantly occurring, with some brief remark, but little is given in detail. For instance,—“ I prayed with Thomas R. ; he is of a very meek and lowly spirit.” “ I went to see T. R., he is very ill, but in a promising state of mind.” “ T. R.—a deeply interesting interview with him.”—“ I went in the evening to my poor young friend, T. R., who has now taken to his bed. I had a most affecting interview with him. He spoke to me about his mother, and with a broken and contrite heart about himself.”—“ This evening spent some time with T. R. I was much pleased with him. While with him I wrote, chiefly by his dictation, to —, who has been so dangerous a companion to him.”

"I passed some time with T. R. who is, I hope, better prepared for his removal from this present world. The poor boy is much endeared to me. I must endeavour, at some future time, to write down a narrative of my conversations with him." "T. R. is worse. He has been very ill all day, and was very low this evening, but appeared happier after we had prayed together."—"T. R. very humble and happier. He gets weaker and weaker, but not in faith."—"I prayed with poor T. R. He is apparently going very fast; but he is, I believe, in a blessed state of mind. He said to me, in answer to a question which I put to him, with a voice faint from his extreme weakness, 'I am all hope!' and as I left him, he added, 'I will keep on asking for mercy; I think He will hear me!' Much as he had disliked my presence at first, I was now struck by his affection for me."

I had often observed his eyes fixed on my hand as it lay upon the open Bible, and I had as often withdrawn it; for it seemed to me that he was comparing its healthy appearance with his own, now so wasted and so pallid, and that when he marked the contrast, he was grieved about it;

I said to him one day, "Why do you look so earnestly upon my hand?" "Because I do so love it!" was his instant reply; and before I was aware of his intention he bent down his head suddenly and pressed his lips to it.

Not long before his death, being one day too unwell to see him, I sent to enquire after him. They brought me word that they feared he would die that night. The next day, however, on going to his mother's cottage, I found him a little revived. As I was taking leave of him, he looked at me very anxiously, and said, "There is still one thing that grieves me." I began to fear that some blessed truth was not clearly apprehended, some precious promise not heartily received, and I asked him, almost in as anxious a spirit, what it was that troubled him. "I find," he answered with a trembling voice, "that I cannot love Jesus my Saviour as I ought to love him; I cannot, do not love Him!" "But you wish to love Him," I said, "you wish to love Him with your whole heart." Instantly the tears rushed into his eyes, and his whole face became crimson. "Oh! indeed, indeed, I do," he replied, and then after a pause, he added, "but

I will go on praying, and He can but cast me off at last." "He will not do so, you know he will not," I said. "No: He will not! He will not!" and as he spoke, a bright smile spread over his whole face.

The next time that I visited him, I find it written in my diary, "I fear that I have taken my last leave in this world of my interesting charge T. R. He turned to me, and said, 'Father, if we do not meet again in this world, I think that we shall meet in heaven.' He was, as I always found him, in the same earnest humble state of mind. The tears gathered into his eyes as he begged his mother to leave him alone with me. 'She will have no one to care for her when I am gone,'—he said, 'be a friend to her for my sake.' Every word he thus uttered was spoken with difficulty, and with a pause between." The day (unlike that on which I paid my first visit to him) was bright with the warm, beautiful sunshine of spring. The trees were bursting into leaf; and in the fresh grass of the green fields opposite the cottage, the cowslip had begun to lift up its gay and scented flowers. The sweet singing of the birds in the hedge-rows of the lane beneath

the open casement came with the pleasant air into the chamber of death. I remembered the melancholy words of a dying person, whom I attended in the spring of the foregoing year. He was sitting at an open window, and as he looked out upon the beautiful garden before him, and saw the trees and the flowers in the first glory of their new life, he said, " 'Tis sad to leave all this at such a season, and to go down to the dark grave." I observed a shade of sadness on the countenance of Thomas R., and I spoke to him of the paradise of the children of God, reminding him how we are taught to expect that a far more glorious beauty will be spread over every thing there. "There will be brighter skies," I said, "and fairer scenes; and the angels of God, and the spirits of saints already departed, to bear you company." I paused for a moment. With an effort—for every word was an effort to him—he continued the sentence,—"AND CHRIST!" They were the last words he ever spoke to me.

At a very early hour the next morning a message came from him that he was dying, and wished to see me; but when I reached the cottage, I found only the pale, lifeless

body, lying motionless as a statue of ivory, the face calm and beautiful with peace, and his mother weeping over it.

I believe that his sins were all blotted out by the blood of Jesus Christ ; and his spirit was converted and sanctified by the quickening power of God the Holy Ghost ; and that he was forgiven and accepted by the Father of Mercies as a living and inseparable member of that mystical body, of which the Son is the ever-living and glorified head.

There is a narrow mound in H—— t Church-yard, it is covered with the greenest turf, and lies in the little angle on the southern side of the old Church, between the porch and wall. It is marked by no head-stone, and is probably unnoticed and unknown by any one, for the desolate mother of Thomas R——n has left the place ; but there rest the mortal remains of that once unhappy, but now blessed child of God.

CHAPTER X.

DESPERATE CHARACTERS.

Few persons, perhaps, have so many opportunities of studying character through so wide a range, and under such a variety of circumstances, as the minister of Christ. His sacred office brings him in contact alike with the holiest and the vilest, the most exalted saint, and the most degraded criminal, the highest and the lowest in the scale of humanity. It is however the blessed privilege of the minister of Christ to minister in spiritual things to the one, while he is perhaps learning much that is edifying to himself; and with regard to the other, while he makes it clearly understood that he regards the sin with deep abhorrence, he may by the sweet exercise of the law of kindness to the sinner, be made the instru-

ment, under God, of winning him to those holy, happy ways, which he might otherwise have never known. The gospel which he is called upon to set forth, not only in his preaching, but in all his intercourse with such characters, is indeed death to sin, and life to every sinner brought by the grace of God to mourn over and forsake his sins.

It so happened, during the early years of my ministry, that I became acquainted with a gang of thieves of daring and desperate character, among my own parishioners. They afterwards acquired a frightful notoriety in that part of the county; and though so many years have passed away, I have lately heard, on returning to the neighbourhood, that the gang is not yet wholly broken up.

A poor widow, who had once moved in a higher sphere, and had enjoyed more than the common comforts of life, came out from the door of her little cottage, one morning, and stopped me as I was walking up the street in which she resided. With a sorrowful expression of countenance, and a trembling voice, she entreated me to find an opportunity of speaking to her son Charles, to persuade him to forsake his evil courses. He was her

youngest child, a handsome youth of nineteen. She had, as she afterwards confessed to me, neglected her elder sons, and lavished all her tenderness, with mistaken indulgence, upon this wilful and ungracious boy : and she had now lost the little control that she once possessed over him : he feared no longer to displease or grieve her. He had taken to drinking, she said, and to remaining out at nights ; and she had every reason to dread that he would come to no good, from the bad companions with whom he was associated. She seemed terrified at the prospect before her, and at being obliged to own to herself that she was almost hopeless about this much-loved child. She did indeed love him ; her very existence was, as it afterwards proved, bound up in him. I saw him soon after, and with affectionate plainness laid before him the inevitable and awful consequences of the course upon which he had entered ; but I saw from his manner that the gravest warnings and the most earnest remonstrances were quite unheeded ; he was sullenly civil, and I left him, feeling that I had spoken, and might continue to speak in vain.

Not many weeks afterwards, several farm-

houses in the immediate neighbourhood were attacked and robbed, in the dead of the night ; but the robbers escaped. Suspicions fell upon a few doubtful characters, but nothing could be brought home to them. Another more daring robbery, however, took place. A farmhouse on H——gh heath was attacked and entered. The master of the house was seized, and placed between two feather beds by some of the miscreants, while the rest of the party ransacked the premises. The poor man was found almost dead ; but the robbers were discovered and taken. Chiefly owing to the information given by the farmer's daughter, an heroic girl of sixteen, some of the men were identified. She had carefully marked their features, when in the scuffle, the crape with which they had covered their faces had been displaced ; and four men were taken into custody. One of the four was Charles N——d. They were brought by the constables to the house of the Clerk of the Peace ; and the crowd assembled round his door, which I saw from my study-window, first apprised me of the fact. A few hours afterwards, the poor old widowed mother of Charles came to me. Her state of mind was truly piteous. She

had just seen the cart driven away, in which her son and his companions were carried off to Bury gaol : and two of her neighbours had led her away, one supporting each arm, to prevent her sinking to the ground. "Oh, Sir," she said, "he went away laughing and jesting with the crowd ; and they said he had no feeling : but I am his mother, and I could see through it all, and how he put on that laugh to hide from all of them how deeply he felt ! He could not hide it from me."

From that hour she was a broken-hearted woman. She had been unwell before, but I now saw that she was not only overwhelmed with grief, but seriously ill ; and after trying to speak comfort, where I felt no comfort could be given, I entreated her to let me send a doctor to her. At first she did not answer ; she had scarcely heeded what I said ; but when I repeated my entreaty, she said with a submissive gentleness, which was very affecting : "Oh yes, Sir, if you please, I will see the doctor, and take any thing that he may give me : but no medicine that he may send me can do me good now, I can never lift up my head again."

Some days after, she brought me a letter

from her son, filled with expressions of penitence ; and he expressed himself with a clearness of view on sacred subjects which astonished me, and which seemed in some sort, to comfort her. He expressed a hope that he should be acquitted for want of evidence in his particular case ; and he made many promises of amendment in the event of his being restored to liberty.

I have since met with many a counterpart of that letter, a sort of production too commonly sent forth on such occasions, by the most consummate villains, concocted with the assistance of some unhappy creature, familiar with the mere cant of religious phraseology. But I was at that time but little experienced in the knowledge of such characters. I afterwards learned from the governor of the gaol, that such was actually the case with regard to that letter.

The poor mother and I read it together ; and she told me it gave her as much consolation as any thing in this world could do. She hoped, and she believed, she said, that he was really penitent. "But ah, it matters little," she added, when I reminded her that the assizes were at hand, and that the trial would soon

be over, and expressed a hope that her son might be then restored to her, and might become a new creature. "It matters little," she said, "he may or he may not be acquitted; he may be penitent, and I hope he is: but I shall never see him again: my heart is broken; and before the assizes come on, I shall be laid in my grave." Her sad words proved but too true. She died; and we laid her body in the grave, before the assizes came on. God was very merciful to her, and He took her from the evil to come. She died believing that the heart of her son was changed. Had she lived longer, she would have known that he was the most daring, reckless, and hardened of that numerous gang.

I had promised the mother, and the prisoner himself, whom I visited in gaol, that I would be present at the trial, and give him every attention in my power as a minister of the gospel; and on the day when the assizes commenced, I set off to Bury St. Edmunds, a distance of twenty miles. Half-way on the road, I overtook a young man in deep mourning, and when he turned his head as I drove by, I recognized one of the brothers of Charles N——d, a young man of excellent character,

and decided piety. He was also on his way to Bury, he told me, to help his unfortunate brother, which he thought it might be in his power to do. I wondered to myself how he could have it in his power to be of any possible assistance to his brother in a court of law : but the poor fellow had already walked many miles, and I made him take his seat beside me, and drove him to his journey's end. On my asking him where he would be set down, he named a little inn at the entrance of the town ; but he was somewhat disconcerted on our arrival there, by finding a crowd of the witnesses against the prisoners, standing about the door. They had all been taken to that house by the attorney for the prosecution ; and some of them looked at me with no very favourable eyes, when they saw me in company with a brother of one of the prisoners. I went on to the Angel, and told my companion to follow me thither. He had expressed a wish that I should go with him to the counsel, whom he had requested an attorney at — to engage in his brother's defence ; the brothers having subscribed together to pay the counsel. We had much difficulty in finding Mr. C——r, a barrister of

first-rate talent, whom Henry N——d had fixed upon as the counsel to be employed. The trial was just commencing when we caught sight of him, coming out of the court. He was in haste, but I stopped him, and he listened with much kindness to the questions of Henry N——d. He turned to the bundle of papers which he held in his hand, and after glancing his eyes over every brief, he said: "There must be some mistake here. Charles N——d! I have no such name. No, I am positive that no application has been made to me. I am not employed for your brother." He was obliged to hurry away, and we entered the assize court. I was shewn into the magistrates' box, and sat beside the judge during the trial. Opposite me, leaning against the iron rails which divided the populace from the dock, I soon after saw the anxious brother of the prisoner. He had pressed through the crowd, and taken his stand there. An exciseman's ink-bottle was fixed to the button hole of his coat, and during the trial, I saw that he was taking notes of all that passed—keeping his place at times, with some difficulty, close to the rails—the court being immensely crowded.

As the trial proceeded, it became more and

more evident that the four prisoners who stood before me in the dock would be found guilty. The case was a daring outrage committed by men of desperate character; the evidence of the witnesses was clear and direct, leaving not a doubt of their guilt—that of the young girl of sixteen, the daughter of the farmer, was conclusive, and it was given with a calm and modest self-possession and propriety of manner, which won for her the approbation of the judge and the admiration of the whole court. The counsel for the defence of Charles N——d was a young barrister, who appeared to have but little acquaintance with his brief, and whose inexperience was but too evident.

I saw the look of disappointment on the face of Henry N——d, when he rose up. The trial was drawing to its close, and the case against all the prisoners seemed clearly made out. My eyes had been frequently turned to Henry N——d. He was now writing—but he suddenly disappeared; immediately after, a note fixed to the end of the long white wand of one of the sheriff's men, was put into the hand of the counsel for Charles N——d, and Henry had again risen up in his place, close

to the iron-railing, and was watching with intense anxiety for the effect of the note on the young barrister. He opened it, and his eye glanced over its contents. I could see that it had given him some information which was quite new to him ; for he stared at the paper, read it again, and instantly rising up, he begged to ask whether Charles N—— had been positively identified and sworn to, as one of the men who had attacked and entered the farm-house. It was a strange question to ask at that stage of the proceedings, and if I remember rightly, it drew forth some disturbed remarks from the attorney for the prosecution. But the judge settled the matter at once, by ordering the principal witness to be recalled. The farmer's daughter again appeared, and took her place in the witness-box. She was desired to look at the prisoner named Charles N——d, and to say on her oath, whether she had actually identified and sworn to him, as well as to the other prisoners, on her examination before the magistrates. She looked at him, as she was bidden, and then with the same mild, modest demeanour, and the same clear, firm voice in which she had before spoken, she said that she certainly had

not sworn to Charles N——d before the magistrates. "Could she identify him now?" She said distinctly, she could not. The testimony she had before given had been of a more general character, as to the guilt of the prisoners at the bar. She had not been asked if she could identify them separately, and she had only answered the questions which were put to her.

This circumstance however, led to the acquittal of Charles N——d. The other men were found guilty—but, though not a person in the court entertained a doubt of his guilt, he had been tried by the law of the land; and he received the full benefit of that law, which had brought no legal evidence against him.

The prisoners were removed from the dock. I looked toward the iron railing for Henry N——d. He had again disappeared. I instantly rose up, and in a few minutes I was standing by his side in the open air. The gate before us opened, and his brother Charles came forth—no longer a prisoner, but as free as ourselves. Henry said nothing to his brother, but passing his arm through that of Charles, he earnestly entreated me to accompany them. We passed quickly through the crowd; we

turned away from the larger streets, and threading our way through several narrow lanes of houses, we reached at length a small hovel, for it was little better, in one of those lanes, in the outskirts of the town. There we entered—its tenant was a relation of the N——ds, and Charles and his brother were received with a hearty welcome. The door was shut, and then Henry turned to me, and with a grave countenance, and a voice of deep emotion, requested me to kneel down with them and offer up their humble thanksgivings to God, for the acquittal of his brother; and added with still greater earnestness, that he hoped I would also pray that God would give him grace to take warning by the danger he had just escaped, and to become a new creature, and lead a new life.

Charles N——d was grave, and thoughtful, and there was a subdued and humble spirit about him, which I had never seen before. He seemed to be much affected, when, on our rising up from prayer, I spoke of his heart-broken mother, whom he was never more to see on earth.

But the impressions made on that memorable day were neither deep nor lasting. I left

the brothers together—Charles did not return to H—gh.

His convicted associates were condemned to be hung. At their execution a circumstance took place, which caused some sensation at the time, and was nearly attended with fatal consequences to the chaplain and the governor. They were standing with the prisoners and the executioner, on the platform under the gibbet; when the drop gave way beneath the weight of those upon it. Some of the party were precipitated to the ground, and as it might be supposed, a frightful confusion was produced—the wretched men, however, for whose escape this plan had been laid, were secured and executed.

It was discovered that the rope which held the drop, had been nearly cut through. Some months after the execution of his companions Charles N——d was again taken up for another robbery, and was condemned to transportation for life. It then came out that he was the daring fellow, who had secretly cut the rope of the drop, thus making a last effort to rescue his associates if possible from their fate.

But Charles N——d had many more com-

panions in iniquity, besides the three who were then hung. The gang was in fact a large one, and formidable, not only from its numbers, but from the vile and desperate character of many who belonged to it. Old B——n, as he was usually called, the father of a large family, was, with one exception, perhaps the most depraved and hardened of the gang. It was said that he had brought up his children to the trade of thieving, and some of them were certainly adepts in the odious craft. One or two by God's preserving grace, escaped the family contagion. His son George was a most daring offender—his likeness to the best portraits of Lord Byron, was remarkable, though his features were finer, and the shape of his head, and the expression of his countenance, more noble, and more strikingly intelligent. His frame was well-proportioned, powerful and muscular, but the most extraordinary part of the likeness was the same deformity—a club-foot.

George B——, (his Christian name and initials were the same as that of the poet) was however, a villain of no common order. He had married a pretty, but bold young woman, who had been born and brought up at the

parish poor-house ; but becoming tired of her, he formed an attachment to a young girl, whose appearance was peculiarly repulsive. I well remember the wretched wife coming to me one evening, in an agony of consternation and alarm. She had narrowly escaped being poisoned by her wicked husband. He had insisted on inviting the girl of whom I have spoken, to drink tea with them ; and contrary to his usual custom, he had chosen to make the tea himself. It was a warm afternoon in summer, and their table was placed in the yard, near the door of their house. After putting the tea into the teapot, he took the teapot into the house to fill it with water from the kettle on the fire, and his wife afterwards recollected that she had seen him put something into it, from a paper he had in his hand. She was surprized by the unusual kindness of his manner, and by his pouring out her tea for her, and pressing her to drink it, saying he hoped she would find it to her liking. She did drink some, and a feeling of sickness came immediately over her. The paper which she had seen him empty into the teapot then suddenly occurred to her, and her suspicions were awakened for the first time.

She said nothing, but observed that neither her husband nor Betsy D——, had drank any of the tea, and when she asked them to do so, the former looked confused. The girl was about to drink, but he would not let her. The wife however, was then seized with such burning pain, and another attack of vomiting so violent, that she felt she had taken poison. Some of her neighbours came to her assistance ; she pointed to the teapot, but the husband seized it and threw its contents into the gutter. The cup however from which she had drunk, and in which some of the tea still remained, had been put aside, unobserved by him, and in that cup a white powder, which proved to be arsenic, was found settled at the bottom. There could be no doubt of the fellow's guilt, but his wife refused to come forward as his accuser, and the affair died away. She left him, and returned to the poor-house ; and not very long afterwards, he was taken up for robbery, sentenced to transportation, but died before he embarked for Australia.

There was one of that notorious gang, who exceeded all in the depth of his depravity, and in his consummate hypocrisy. He was

indeed for many years entirely unsuspected by any one.

My first acquaintance with him commenced, when I was summoned to his bed-side, where he lay crippled and distorted with rheumatism. He appeared so palsied with weakness in the back, that he was unable to raise himself in the bed. His wrists were twisted outward, and his fingers so contracted, that he had lost the use of them, and could not even fasten a button of his clothing. He expressed much pleasure on seeing me, and his words were smoother than oil. He was skilled in the cant of a religious phraseology, and was a fluent talker. His wife was much younger than himself; her manners were quiet, and her appearance neat and rather pleasing. He begged to be raised, that he might sit up, and we lifted him up with some difficulty, for he was a fat heavy man; his wife seated herself upon the bed, behind the bolster, and remained there propping him up with all her strength, while I read the Bible, and prayed with him. Perhaps he did feel some anxiety for the time, about his eternal state—I would not say he did not—It is not for man to judge his fellow-sinner, no, not

even a hypocrite. At that time I suspected nothing. I went away not liking his specious smoothness or whining voice, but heartily feeling for his bodily suffering, about which there could be no mistake.

After I had left H——h, for a curacy in Kent, I returned to pass a week with my kind old friend, the rector; and one of the first enquiries I made, on going out to visit some of my sick and aged friends among the poor, was for Cornelius D——. I heard then for the first time a strange, sad story. That old and miserable cripple—that mass of feebleness and distortion, had been taken from his bed to prison, and tried for his life at Bury. It had been discovered that he was the leading villain of the gang, and a kind of amateur in his craft. It was proved, that at the dead of the night, he would often cause himself to be dressed by his wife,—for he had not strength in his fingers to put on, or even to button his clothes—and laid on a heap of straw in a cart, he would go out with a portion of the gang to their scenes of midnight depredation, giving his directions to the party how to proceed, and initiating the young and inexperienced in the mysteries of their iniquity,—of course

claiming and receiving—perhaps it was really on this account that he went with them—his portion of the booty. He was tried and condemned to transportation for life ; but, worn out by the exhaustion and sufferings which he had undergone, he died in the cart in which they were carrying him to Portsmouth, where he was to have been put on board the convict-ship.

There was another of the gang, John M——n, a fine, spirited fellow, but bold, bad and reckless, giving himself very little concern as to who knew, or did not know, the evil course he ran. On one occasion he came up to the kind-hearted Rector of H——h, in the public street, and said, “Pray do you say that I stole a sack of wheat from your barn ?” He had heard that the Rector had spoken of him as a suspected person, and he had the hardihood thus to dare him to the accusation.

Not long after this, he attacked and robbed a man—as it was said—on the highway, and struck him some frightful blows on the head. He was taken immediately, and sent to prison, tried for his life, found guilty, and condemned to be hanged. I went over to Bury to visit him, and at the wish of the

Chaplain, who was old, and in infirm health, I agreed to take his place in the cell and on the scaffold, with my wretched parishioner. The day for his execution was fixed. On the previous morning, when entering the prison, the figure of a man standing in the gateway, attracted my attention. I did not wonder, when told who and what he was, that I had felt a kind of instinctive horror at the sight of him. "That man, Sir," said the governor, "is the hangman; and he is so inveterate a drunkard, that we shall have to shut him up in close confinement all night, to keep him sober and ready for the execution to-morrow morning. We could not employ him except on that condition, and as he receives a large fee, he allows himself to be locked up." I have before me now the image of that most forbidding figure, his countenance, his manner, and the very dress he wore; the flat cadaverous features, the small eyes with their cunning twinkle, the wide mouth with a perpetual smile circling the thin compressed lips; the lank, dark, greasy hair, smoothly plastered down over his low forehead: the short-necked, broad-set frame; the loose thread-bare blue coat, with a greasy glaze upon the cuffs and

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elbows, with large tarnished brass buttons; the breeches of dark green velvet, with the same greasy glaze on the knees, the cotton stockings of a dingy white, and the high-low shoes upon his broad splay feet. He was the chief executioner in the kingdom, the Jack Ketch of Newgate, and sent for whenever an execution took place in the provincial towns. He had come from Norwich that morning, and as the worthy governor told me, was out of humour, because the man whom he had been summoned to hang, had been reprieved. He had just been complaining of the interruption he had met with, saying that it was a hard thing that business was not allowed to go on in its proper course. In my disgust at what I heard, I could not resist going up to him, and telling him gravely, how glad I was to hear that the execution at Norwich had been stopped, and that it ought to be a subject of congratulation to him, that he was spared, at least on that occasion, the dreadful office of taking away a fellow-creature's life. But he was a match for me; and made some unmeaning reply with a soft and oily voice. It was evident that he was fully conscious of being a person of importance. He was ex-

tremely civil, and some days after, when I knew him better, and happened to ask his name, he replied, glibly : " Thomas Foxon, at your pleasure, Sir ; shall I write it down ? "

As I stood conversing with him, and thought of the character he bore as an habitual drunkard, and that the office which he held was one which separated him from the sympathies, and almost from the companionship of his fellow-men, the irresistible disgust with which I had at first shrank from him, was changed into a deep and unaffected compassion. ' Does any one,' I said to myself, ' feel for, or even think of the spiritual necessities of this wretched man ? Is there one friendly voice to remind him of that awful day when he, who has been the executioner of the sentence of the earthly judge, shall stand side by side with the convicted criminals who have died by his hands, before the tribunal of the great Judge of heaven and earth ? Has there been one to point out to him that meek and innocent Jesus, who also died under the hands of the executioner ? Has there been one to beseech him to seek and find a Redeemer and Deliverer, now, in Him, who shall come hereafter to be our judge ;

even in Him who died for our sins and rose again for our justification?' Mildly, but earnestly, I put the question to him; "Have you ever thought of that day—are you prepared for it—when you also will be forced to leave this world, and to stand side by side with those who have died by your hands; and when you yourself will have to answer, as well as they, before the judgment-bar of the great God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to give an account of the deeds done in the body?"

But alas! I found it impossible, so far as I could judge, to make any impression upon that impenetrable man. He was not in the least angered or provoked. The arrow which had been shot forth, pierced not the rhinoceros-hide, grazed not even the surface, but glided off, leaving it as smooth as if it had not touched it. With his usual smile, and with a tone of drawling softness, he said, "I love to hear you talk, Sir, and dear me, how pleased my wife would be, if she could hear you; she is a very religious woman." I said no more. The insinuating smile with which he met my grave and earnest look, the drawling voice and maudlin manner sickened me to the very

heart. I turned the subject and said, "I am anxious to know under what circumstances you could have been led to undertake your present office." "Why, Sir," he replied, "it was just this—when Bellingham was hanged—as you may remember, Sir, for the murder of Mr. Percival in the lobby of the House of Commons—they hired my cart to convey the body, and soon after, the place I fill, was vacant. Well, I thought to myself, why should not I come forward, and apply for the situation. You know, Sir, there must be some one to execute his majesty's laws, some one was wanted for the place, for his majesty's laws must be executed ; don't you think so?" I could only reply in the affirmative. "But it must have been a painful office to you," I said. "At first, Sir. Yes, at first ; but use, Sir,—one gets used to it. I did feel very queer, and odd for a time or two ; but I go through it now as a matter of business ; it is my business, and I flatter myself that I am a skilful hand at it, and I can save the poor creatures from a deal of suffering, by my dexterity and experience. Why, Sir, only the other day when I was down at an execution at E——, there was another man employed in my place

at Newgate, and he did not fasten the rope in the right way, the knot should be under the ear, but it slipped round and got under the chin of the poor sufferer, and it was a sad piece of business, for he had to struggle and suffer when he might have died in no time!" He went on to speak of two or three executions with a kind of enthusiasm in the business which I could not have believed any human being, with human feelings, could possibly have felt; but that he did feel it, I could not doubt. I heard him in silence, wondering within myself—my disgust increased, but my mind was unconsciously interested by so new, and yet so loathsome an exhibition of human nature. I might have thought, had I not seen his unchanging smile and witnessed the fondness with which he dwelt on the details of an execution, that he had fled to drunkenness to banish thought; but had my reader heard him speak of those details—I do not give them here—as if he looked back to them with a positive complacency, he would agree with me that the feelings of that man were never shocked by the horrors of the scaffold, and of the death-struggle.

Many years after I was invited by the Chap-

lain of Newgate to attend a well-known criminal, Daniel Good, under sentence of death for a murder of the most horrible description. I was not present, I am happy to say, at the execution ; but I went to Newgate immediately after, to learn if the murderer, of whose guilt no one entertained a doubt, had made the confession we had anxiously looked for, and there I saw the executioner who is now employed—a thoughtful, manly person, whose grave and benevolent expression of countenance was a remarkable contrast to that of poor Foxon. I may also mention, that before an execution which took place lately at Chester, the executioner was observed by the matron of the city gaol, on his knees in earnest prayer, in an empty cell. But I return to my narrative. With a feeling of relief I turned away, and proceeded to the condemned cell. The massive doors were unbolted and unlocked, and, at my especial request, I was left with the prisoner. His downcast looks brightened for a moment when he saw me enter ; and he thanked me warmly, when I told him that I had come to remain with him to the last, and should not leave him, except for half an hour, to take some refreshment which had been

kindly offered me, at the governor's house. I found a respectable-looking and well-educated man with John M—n. He had been tried and sentenced to imprisonment for some fraudulent transactions, and the High Sheriff had wisely ordered that he should be placed in the same cell with the condemned man till the execution took place. This man had borne a high character, and appeared to be really contrite for his sin. Sir H—— B——, the High Sheriff, had desired him to read the Bible to his companion, that while his presence might be thus made a comfort to the condemned prisoner, he might at the same time be obliged to realize, in some manner, the awful consequences, even on earth, of that course upon which he had himself entered.

With these two men I passed the remainder of the day—with them I was shut up for the night, and with them I read and prayed from time to time. It was a solemn season to us all, and one which I trust was blessed of God to us. The sun was to set for the last time upon one of the party that night, and that was to be his last night on earth. Before his death I had a good hope concerning that once bold and ungodly man, and reason to

believe that he died a sincere penitent, deeply humbled before God for his many and great offences, and meekly trusting in that gracious Redeemer, whose precious blood cleanseth us from all sin. His time for self-recollection and self-examination was short, but his conviction of sin was deep and genuine. He was, I felt convinced, in downright earnest, and he was brought to confess that he was a great sinner, and to believe that Jesus Christ saveth to the uttermost all who look to Him, and call upon Him.

During these long hours, much conversation took place; and I heard from John M—n many of the events of his past life. His parents, he told me, had endeavoured to teach him what was right, and to set him a good example; but there was an old man, a near neighbour, who had tempted him to become a thief, even when a little child, and had promised and given him halfpence for any thing that he could steal and bring secretly to him. When he grew up to be a youth, he became a poacher, a sabbath-breaker, and at length a robber. “Ah, Sir,” he said to me, “how I wish I had attended to your kind warnings when you used to see me hanging about with

a set of idle fellows at the corner of A——l Street. I did not care then, and I laughed at your warnings. But if I had listened to you then, I should not now be here, in this condemned cell. But I would not work, I idled about, or slept all the day ; and when night came, I took my lurcher, which I kept tied up in the yard at the back of my house, and went out after the hares and pheasants. I shall never forget, Sir, the first night, when I went with some of our gang to commit a robbery. We broke into a mill, and I had to carry a sack of flour. I bore the load with ease, but there was a feeling within which I could not bear ; for I was not hardened then, and I shook with alarm, and stopt and looked about me almost at the rustling of a leaf, or the risings of the wind ; every sound appeared to me as if there was some one at my heels. But my companions laughed and jeered at me ; and I soon became as bold and as reckless as any of the party. I remember, for instance, not long ago, how careless we all were, when we went to rob Mr. D——'s malt-house : this we did every week. As it happened our light went out, and as there was no place where we could safely light the lantern, at that hour,

for it was past midnight—but at my house, we sent one of the fellows thither for that purpose. Now my house, as you know, Sir, is at the end of B——n, and a full mile from the malt-house. The man was gone for at least an hour ; and would you believe it, Sir, we all sat laughing and talking together during the whole time, in the malt-house. One of the sleeping rooms of the family was close over our heads, and we heard the loud snoring of some one above us all the time.”

He dwelt much on the way in which his Sabbaths had been spent, and told me, how he and his party had altogether forsaken every place of worship, and indeed profaned the whole sacred day. “Our Sundays were always our worst days,” he added ; “and often, when part of your congregation were coming into the town to church, they met us going out for the peaching and the thieving of the day.”

The governor came for the last time to the door, to tell me, that he was about to lock me up for the night with my companions, and when I heard the clang of the heavy bolts and of the locks, as the two massive doors of the cell were fastened one after the

other, and every sound had died away—the first object that met my eye was the gleam of a large knife, which lay on a stool beside me—but I smiled at the idea of fear from either of the prisoners—though I could not help feeling that if they meditated any plan of escape, and I should attempt to prevent it, I might have wished that knife farther off. It was a curious circumstance that some hours afterwards John M—n began to speak on this very subject. “Had I known, Sir,” he said, after a pause of silence, which had continued some time—“had I known that the trial would have gone against me, and that I should have been condemned to die, I should certainly have made an attempt to escape. Life is sweet, and I am going to die.” “My poor friend,” I replied, “you might have made the attempt, but you cannot suppose that in a prison like this, with its solid walls, and its many doors, and its high enclosures, you could have had a chance of succeeding.” He had been sitting with his head bowed, and his eyes fixed on the stone-floor—but he raised his head, and looked me in the face and said—“A few weeks ago, one of my fellow-prisoners did escape,” and he then

described to me the method which the man had taken—and he added, “ high as the walls were, he raised himself to the top of them, and had got clear off.” He rose up and walked to the window—and stood gazing, as it seemed to me, upon the bars of thick and solid iron, firmly imbedded in the deep stone mullions of the window—he said something to his fellow-prisoner, about the possibility of removing bars, even as strong and firm as those. But I called off his attention, reverting to the prisoner who had lately escaped, and merely asking the question ; “ Is he not likely to be retaken ; and supposing such were the case, you may conceive what his feelings would be, when brought back to this place ? ” “ He was retaken, Sir,” he replied gravely, “ after wandering about, and hiding himself in the fields and woods for a few days, he was seized at some distance, and brought back on the top of the coach ; and since then he has been heavily ironed, and has lost much of the liberty and comfort which he had before, in common with the other prisoners.” Here a silence again ensued : it was broken by his asking me if I would look at my watch and tell him the hour. I did so ; and he said ;

“The watchman must have fallen asleep, for he has not cried the hour for some time.”—I should here mention, that as hour after hour passed from the time that we had been locked up, we had heard the prison watchman, as he went his rounds, calling out the hour. He then alluded again with seeming carelessness to the subject of escape, remarking that it would be a good opportunity to take, when the watchman was off his guard. “But is it not likely,” I asked, “that this may be done on purpose? May he not have been ordered to go his rounds sometimes in silence, and sometimes to call the hour, that the prisoners may never be able to calculate the exact time of his passing by on his rounds?” I had hazarded this remark, which had suddenly occurred to me; but on mentioning the circumstance to the governor the next morning, I found that I was correct in my surmise. Poor fellow, it was evident, that the thought of escape, however unattainable, was passing across the mind of M—n! It was very natural, for the prison-gates were only to open to him, that he might pass through them to the scaffold and to death. I called off his attention however to that subject, which I

felt was the only one of real interest and deep importance to him, and which I felt was the only subject that could calm his troubled thoughts at such a season. I begged him to sit down and listen to the message which the Lord God had sent me to deliver to him, and with much gentleness he complied : and we were soon occupied in the quiet consideration of God's most gracious word, and in prayer.

The dead silence that succeeded at that solemn hour, was suddenly disturbed by the loud and repeated blasts of a horn, which, from the silence of every thing around us, seemed to be close at hand. Again and again that horn was sounded, and a short time after it had ceased, the bolts of the doors of the cell were withdrawn, and the door itself was thrown open, and the governor appeared. "A king's messenger has arrived from London," he said ; " and the execution is put off till we receive further commands. He has brought a respite—*not a reprieve*—for you, my poor fellow, I fear I can hold out no hopes of *that*. But the execution will not take place to-morrow, so the best thing you can do is to go comfortably to bed.

"The bed that was prepared for you, Sir," said the governor to me, after we had quitted the cell, "I am sorry to say, is engaged. My brother arrived suddenly at a late hour to-night, and we gave him the chamber which we hoped you would have occupied. And now, Sir, I know not where you will find a bed, except indeed at the 'Angel,' for that Inn must be open, as the king's messenger is gone there."

I replied, that I should easily find my way to the Inn, and declining the offer of the governor to send some one with me, I told him I would set off without loss of time to the 'Angel.' But when the prison-gates had closed against me, and I stood without, looking forth into the dark night, I began to fear that it would be no such easy matter to find my way to the Inn. I was almost a stranger to Bury, and all that I knew was that I had to turn to the right hand and not to the left—and that the 'Angel' was nearly a mile, through a wide open suburb, from the gaol. But the night was perhaps the darkest I ever remember, and not a light was to be seen. In the prison, and locked up in the condemned cell, I had not felt the slightest fear; but out

of the prison, and in the open road, I began to be alarmed by the very reasonable fear that I was likely enough to lose my way, and to wander about till morning. I thought for a moment of ringing the bell at the gate, and asking for a guide, but on second thoughts—I made up my mind to plunge into the black darkness, and make the attempt to find my way, as well as I could. And so I walked forward at a brisk pace; and at length, with no little pleasure, I saw the Angel Inn full before me. The door stood wide open, and a gleam of light from within, streamed brightly down the steps into the darkness, and a few moments afterwards, I was quietly seated in a small parlour near the door, conversing with the king's messenger about the respite of my wretched friend, John M—n.

Mr. S——h the Magistrate, by whom he had been committed for trial, had found out that a false statement had been made in the evidence brought before him against the prisoner. He had been tried and found guilty, and condemned to death on the charge of robbery, with cutting and maiming on the King's highway. Mr. S——h had called on me to take him to the spot, which being in my own

parish, I knew well. He there found that the assault had been committed not on the King's highway, but in a stack-yard by the road-side—where the hat of the prisoner had been picked up, and where the marks of a struggle were then to be seen on the ground. Feeling deeply for the youth of the prisoner, and deploring the severity of the sentence, the kind-hearted Magistrate—though an aged man, in a feeble state of health—had gladly availed himself of this error in law, to take up a statement of the circumstance, and a petition that the prisoner's life might be spared, to Sir Robert (then Mr.) Peel, the Home Secretary. He had himself gone to London, and afterwards to the Isle of Wight. The Home Secretary, or the Judge, Chief Justice Abbot, I forget which—being at the time out of town. Reference was to be made to the Judge according to the usual custom—and a respite was sent down express by a king's messenger to Bury, to defer the execution till the decision of the Judge could be known.

Early on the following morning, I returned to the cell of the prisoner. The governor, a peculiarly kind and humane man, had agreed

with me, that so far from encouraging the slightest hope of a reprieve in the prisoner, we would endeavour to impress upon him that he must only look upon the execution of his sentence as suspended, not reversed. But, alas! we found that it was not in the power of man to extinguish the hope of life, which had been revived in his breast. He said, in words, that he could not expect that his life would be spared, but his altered looks and manner, and every now and then an expression which he dropped, betrayed the fact that he did expect to be spared, and he afterwards confessed to me that his hopes had got the better of his fears. I passed the chief part of that day with him. I was called out on one occasion; I found that it was to see the mother of the prisoner, and to explain to her that her son's execution, though delayed, would most probably soon take place.

The poor broken-hearted woman had made an effort to come herself with a cart to take away the body of her son. Dreadful as the thought was to her, that she should find only his stiff and bloated corpse on her arrival, she had felt that the worst would then be over, quite over; and with a burst of feeling at

once natural and contradictory to nature, she could not help lamenting, that if he were to die, his death was still hanging over her, that the terrible trial was not past, it was yet to come. In a state of stunned and speechless distress, slowly, almost mechanically, she drove away from the gate of the gaol. An immense crowd, which had assembled to witness the execution, was at the time dispersing, and before I could turn away, another cart drove up: a woman had come to the prison to have a wen rubbed by the hand of the dead man; believing, in her stupid and disgusting superstition, that the hand of a corpse that had been hung would remove it.

I left Bury that evening to return home for the duties of the next day, which was Sunday, but a letter from the governor soon after called me back to the gaol. The day for the execution was again fixed. The Chief Justice had not thought fit to recommend a reprieve, and the prisoner was to die. When I entered his cell, he had already heard the sad tidings. His manner was calm and thoughtful, but he welcomed my return with delight. I was struck with a remark that he made. It was a pleasant day, in the lovely month of August,

and the window of his cell stood wide open ; a winged seed of thistle-down floated in through the window, upon the soft breeze, into his cell. He watched it as it entered, and he said, "Ah ! foolish thing ! you know not where you are coming, or you would not come here. O, if I were you, how glad I should be to fly far away from this place ; I should never have done what you are doing now !"

If I had thought only of the mortal life, and the mortal sufferings of the poor prisoner, I might have regarded the respite as a cruel and bitter aggravation of his trials, but the All-wise disposer of every event, without whom not a sparrow falleth to the ground, had, in the graciousness of His mercy, ordered and overruled it for his good in the highest sense. I have no doubt, but that the delay was made a blessing to his immortal spirit.

The night that preceded his execution, and on which I was again shut up with him and his companion in the condemned cell, found him in a far more softened state ; not a word was said of an escape, but with a manly and composed spirit, he seriously prepared himself to die. His thoughts seemed to be fully occupied with the one subject of deep and vital

importance, not only to him, but to every living, as well as to every dying man. There is a wide difference between having to set the simple scheme of the gospel before a careless and indifferent person, and one listening to it in deep and intense anxiety. Who can doubt that more was learnt in that one memorable night, within the walls of the prison of Philippi, when the trembling and convicted gaoler fell down before Paul and Silas, crying : "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" more was learnt of vital and saving knowledge by that heart-stricken man, than has been acquired during the whole course of a life by many who have, through a long series of years, heard exactly the same glorious truths in a spirit of utter unconcern ; caring nothing, seeking nothing, and therefore knowing nothing, finding nothing, while hearing every thing.

The poor condemned prisoner was indeed one who thirsted for the waters of life : and it was my blessed privilege to lead him to the fountain of living waters, of which our Lord has testified, that "whosoever drinketh, shall never thirst : " to remind him of our Redeemer's gracious words,—“ If any man thirst, let

him come unto me and drink." I must confess that I have no sympathy with those morbid sentiments, which have been occasionally brought before the public, in connexion with the accounts of the last hours of the most infamous criminals. To say nothing of the bad effect upon the public mind of throwing a kind of sentimental interest round some monster of wickedness, whose atrocious deeds have filled every heart with horror, the statements themselves which I have seen, have too commonly afforded most unsatisfactory evidence as to any real and vital change in the subjects of them. On the other hand, it cannot be doubted that some of the vilest and worst of men, under sentence of execution, have been truly and savingly converted to God even at that, their eleventh hour ; so that to use, with all seriousness, the words of the Apostle Paul, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Poor John M— had been a daring offender against the laws of God and man ; and it pleased God in His great mercy, not only to stop him in his evil course, but to bring him to feel and to acknowledge his iniquity. From my acquaintance with him, I saw that he possessed qualities, which,

- had they been rightly trained, might have rendered him a noble character. The abhorrence with which he regarded his past life, was, I trust, that of a genuine repentance ; and the earnestness with which he sought for forgiveness through the blood of Christ, sprung, I firmly believe, from a true faith. But even if I were enabled to recal the details of my conversations with him in his cell, I should not do so : I should leave them to the privacy in which they took place. Some things I may mention : for instance, his deep anxiety that those of his former associates, who were still at large, and that every young man with whom he had been acquainted, might be urged to take warning by his example and his death.
- He spoke to me more particularly of one or two individuals, deploring their hardened state, and he entreated me to address the people of H——gh from the pulpit, on the Sunday after his execution, on the subject of his crimes and of his end. He begged also that I would request his parents to put a headstone over his grave, and to write the inscription myself, and that it might be placed in the church-yard of the village of R——y, by the side of the path, so that it might be

read by those who passed along to the house of God. It was this church-yard, he told me, that the gang with which he was associated, had used as their rendezvous. Thither they had come from various parts of the neighbourhood to their midnight meetings, and from thence they had gone forth to their scenes of burglary and plunder. The village of R——y is about two miles from H——gh, and the church is on the summit of a hill above the village.

Hour after hour passed away in that condemned cell ; we heard the watchman's voice at intervals, as before, but no horn again broke upon the stillness of the night. Those awful hours however were sanctified, I humbly trust, by the word of God, which was solemnly read and expounded, and by the prayers which were breathed forth from the hearts of those who offered them. About midnight, poor M——n proposed retiring for a few hours to one of the two small sleeping cells, adjoining that in which we were sitting. I asked him to bring his mattress and lay it down beside me ; but he thanked me, and said that he should feel no uneasiness at being alone.

His companion withdrew also to the other

cell ; and with my Bible open on the table before me, I began to employ myself in preparing the sermon which I was to preach to the prisoner and the other inmates of the gaol a few hours after. The dead stillness which prevailed,—the time,—the place,—the dreadful event which was coming nearer and nearer with every passing hour—all combined to produce a feeling of awe that was almost oppressive. But the single light which shone out in that gloomy cell, threw its rays upon the glorious record of the love of the eternal God to his fallen guilty children—that living word which revealed Him as a Father, reconciled to the vilest sinner through the blood of His own Son, and meeting the trembling, dying penitent, with this declaration of inexpressible comfort, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” silencing every fear and every doubt with this assurance, “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.” It is in such dreary seasons that the power, which the Holy Scriptures alone possess to elevate the sinking spirit and to cheer the heavy heart, is most sensibly experienced. It is in the deepest earthly gloom that their heavenly light shines

forth most brightly. And so I found it on that night of gloom and sorrow. It was impossible not to feel an intense and agonising sympathy with that poor condemned prisoner,—impossible not to identify oneself, in some measure, with his wretchedness; and what should I have done, how could I have attempted to support and comfort him, without that Book of books—that Word of life, to which I could appeal as almost to the Lord God Himself, for the authority of all that I set before His guilty servant?

The language of his contrite heart might be truly described by that well-known confession, “I have sinned against the Lord:” and it was my high privilege to bring before him, from that word of truth and life, that message of Divine authority, “The Lord hath put away thy sin.” It was indeed a season of awful, but holy, quietness to me; it seemed to say, “Commune with *thine own heart*, and in thy chamber, and be still.” No sound broke upon that hallowed stillness, but the voice that told that another hour of the prisoner’s short span of mortal life was gone: and from time to time, the melancholy boom of the bittern distinctly heard through the mid-

night air, from the low grounds beyond the gaol. About an hour before day-break, however, a dull, heavy, yet ringing sound, like the fall of a ponderous hammer, startled me from my quiet meditations : it was repeated ; and as it continued, I guessed, and guessed truly, from whence it proceeded. The scaffold was being erected for the execution of my companion, without the walls of the gaol. It would be difficult to describe the effect of those deep muffled strokes, as they continued to fall : and the associations they brought with them. I listened in breathless anxiety to discover whether the poor prisoner had been disturbed by them ; but all seemed quiet in his narrow cell, and I hoped that he had not heard them. But when he joined me again at six o'clock, he told me that he had been awoke by those appalling sounds, and that he knew what they meant. The two following hours were passed with our Bibles and in prayer : and at eight o'clock, the governor appeared, and invited me to come to breakfast at his house. I was unwilling to leave poor M——n ; but I felt that it was necessary to take some refreshment, to enable

me to go through the arduous and painful duties which were now before me.

After breakfast, we proceeded to the chapel, where all the prisoners were assembled for the service. Near the spot where poor M——n was standing, was the coffin in which his body was soon after laid with the pall spread over it. But there it was my privilege to speak of Him who hath taken away the sting of death, and spoiled the grave of its victory : and to set forth Christ crucified as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ; even to the chief of sinners.

After the service, the governor requested me to return for a short time to his house : and it did not occur to me at the time to ask the reason of his request. I regretted that I had not done so : for it would have been a comfort to me to have stood beside the prisoner, during that short but trying time. The change in his appearance, when I again joined him, I had not anticipated, and it greatly shocked me. His own clothes had been substituted for the prison-dress, in which I had been so long accustomed to see him. But he was heavily ironed with gyves between his legs ; his wrists were pinioned before him—

his neckcloth removed, and his throat partly open, and on his head a white tasselled night-cap. His countenance was grave, but very calm. He was waiting for me, the governor said, hoping that I would go round the gaol with him, as he wished to take leave of his fellow-prisoners, and say a few words to them for the last time.

It was a deeply affecting sight, to see him, prepared as he was for immediate execution, stop successively, before the iron palisades of the several yards where the various inmates of the gaol were assembled : but I was astonished to hear the short and admirable warnings which he addressed to them as he passed along. It would have been difficult to have found words more to the purpose than those which he spoke. I remember particularly his few affectionate words to a youth of sixteen, whose tearful and ingenuous countenance contrasted strongly with those of his companions. " My poor, poor boy," he said, and his voice shook with emotion ; " this is the first time that you have ever been in this place ; let it be the last. Take warning by me. You see what Sabbath-breaking, poaching, and thieving have brought me to ; and I

began as you have done ; and now I am going to be hanged like a dog."

While he was thus speaking, I caught for a moment the glimpse of a dark forbidding countenance at the further end of the yard—the man saw me, and was skulking away into his cell. "Come forward," I called out to him, addressing him by name. It was old B——n, the fellow-townsmen of the poor prisoner, and one of the same gang—that man of whom I have already spoken, who had brought up his children in iniquity, and who was now himself under sentence of transportation for life. "Come forward ; for if any one in this gaol needs the warning of the sight, and the last words of one going forth to the scaffold, it is yourself. Your life is spared ; but those who know you, are well aware that though unfit and unprepared to die, your guilt has well deserved the same sentence. You have time given you to seek for pardon and for grace ; and God in His mercy grant that you may seek it, before it be too late."

"I have one favour to ask of you, Sir," said poor M——n, as I walked beside him to the gate of the gaol, on our way to the scaffold ;

"will you promise me not to leave this place till my body has been cut down, and you have seen my coffin put into the cart, and driven away to my father's house?" I need not say how readily I made the promise which he required of me,—“I will not quit you for a moment, my friend,” I added; “I wish that you could lean upon my arm, as easily as I am willing to offer it to you. This indeed he was unable to do—for his hands being pinioned, he was not at liberty to raise them, but I walked close to him, and took care that he should feel from the pressure of my arm to his, that a faithful friend was close to him. “Now pray for strength in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,” I whispered, as the great gates were thrown open, and we went forth among the crowded thousands who were assembled to witness the execution. “Now pray for strength, and go on praying.” “I will—I do, Sir!” he replied, with a low but firm voice. “God give you strength,” I continued, “for Christ’s sake. Think of the sufferings of Jesus for you—your sufferings are as nothing compared with His, and He was innocent. He had done nothing worthy of death; but He died, the innocent for the

guilty—for you and for me—that he might bring us to God.”

A lane of constables with their staves in their hands, had been drawn up from the gate of the gaol to the scaffold, and they kept the mob off, and the passage between them clear, so that we passed along without interruption. The execution took place in a green meadow, under the prison-walls, on the side towards the open country. I can even now recal the sickness of heart which came over me, when, on turning the corner of that high-wall, the scaffold stood full before us. It was the first I had ever seen, it was only raised perhaps twelve or fourteen feet from the ground, and its nearness to the people—I could scarcely tell why—threw a kind of familiar horror over it. There were two ladders leading to the low platform of the drop. When we reached the foot of one of them, and M——n was about to ascend, there was some short delay. The governor asked us to wait. I saw that this waiting was a trial to the prisoner. But he was enabled to master it, and still to keep up that manly, but quiet courage and self-possession, which marked his whole demeanour to the last. I could rejoice in it,

because I knew from whence it sprung, even from that renewed nature, which I fully believe God had graciously implanted in him, and which, considering his former life, was a marvel indeed, for he was as one born in a day. But oh, it was a deeply affecting sight to behold that fine young fellow, in the very prime of youthful manhood, his finely-developed form, and firmly-knit limbs, his fresh healthy countenance, in all the vigour of life—he was but six-and-twenty—before me; and to know that in a few minutes he would be a motionless and bloated corpse. I watched him closely; never turning my eyes from him; and I saw that his knees did not shake or even bend under him, as he slowly ascended the steps to the scaffold. I followed him, while the governor mounted by the other ladder. In less than a minute, the executioner had sprung up from behind, and was occupied in loosening the shirt-collar, and laying bare the throat of poor M——. I saw his eyelids move, and his lip quiver as the knot of the rope was adjusted round his throat: but with a strong effort, he seemed as it were, to gulp down the agony of feeling, ere it prevailed. At the desire of several persons, I had delayed

till now to speak to John M——n, on a circumstance in which it was supposed he had been concerned ; the death of a young tradesman of H——gh, who shortly before was found drowned, under suspicious circumstances, one winter's morning. I had no thought in my own mind, that poor M——n had had any thing to do with this mysterious affair ; but I put the question to him, and asked him to answer, as one on the very brink of eternity, and whose spirit was about to appear within a few minutes, in the presence of the Lord God. He solemnly assured me, and I believe he spoke the truth, that he knew nothing of the matter, and that he was quite innocent of it. I then asked him to speak as loudly as he could, and to declare in the hearing of all the people his innocence of the charge as in the sight of God. But, poor fellow, it was impossible : his voice, firm as it was, had lowered to a whisper ; he made the effort, but in vain ; and he asked me to speak for him. After I had done this, I placed my hands on his, and pressed them in an affectionate farewell, whispering a few words to encourage him and to urge him to continue in prayer to the very last, and I told him again that I

should not quit him, but stand where I was, till all was over. The cap was now drawn down over his face. I had agreed with the executioner before hand, that he should not cut the drop till I had given him the signal ; and told him that I should continue reading, and should not cease till after the drop had fallen ; the signal was, that I should let fall the white handkerchief which I held in my hand. I commenced reading aloud those beautiful scriptures, which are placed at the beginning of our burial service. I read no other part of the service ; but began again repeating them, for I wished that no word but the living word of God should sound in the ears of the dying man at that awful moment. While I was reading, for I did not stop, so that he knew not the exact moment when his death should come upon him, I let fall the handkerchief. Whatever it cost me, I was determined not to turn away, or to flinch from the promised duty. The kind-hearted governor had partly descended from the platform, and stood weeping like a child on the ladder ; the drop had fallen ; but I was standing aloft and alone, with my eyes steadily fixed on the dying man. I saw his

head drop on one side, and an inward flutter rise upon his open chest. I caught a glimpse of the executioner below, skilfully hastening his horrid work. The death-struggle was but for a moment, and all was over.

And now I turned away. I would not once look back, as I slowly returned to the gaol, disgusted with the shouts and laughter which rose from some quarters of that immense crowd. I requested that I might be summoned after the body had hung its appointed hour; and the coffin had been fastened down, and placed in the cart.

I was glad to be alone: and I was hastening to the chamber which the governor had offered for my use, when I met the hangman. With all my aversion to the very sight of that man, I could not resist going up to him, and thanking him in warm terms, for the humanity and skill with which he had performed his dreadful office. His wonted smile became unusually expansive, as in his softest tones, he expressed his satisfaction at my approval, and held out his hand to shake mine. I instinctively drew back, I felt that I could not bear the touch of that hand, hot and reeking as it was with the sweat of his office: but a second feeling

told me, that he would receive more harm from the uncivil disgust of my spirit, than I should from the grasp of his hand, and I shook his offered hand.

Hitherto I had been enabled to bear up, and to be firm and composed : oftentimes the struggle had been severe : but I had conquered myself by saying : How dare I think of my own feelings, or indeed of myself, for a moment, in any way, in the presence of one whose actual sufferings it is impossible for me, or any man but himself, to enter into. The relief however was unspeakable, when having locked the door of that chamber, and being alone with God, I could give way to my pent up feelings, and thank Him for the strength which He had given me ; and above all, for His unspeakable mercy, and most tender compassion to the soul of that guilty man,—but I trust also, that brother in Christ—who had now entered into his eternal state.

I saw the coffin placed in the cart ; the mother had not been able to come a second time : but a friend and neighbour had taken her place : and the body of John M——n was driven away to the father's house.

On the day following, I preached the

funeral sermon. The church of H——gh is one of the largest in the kingdom ; but the crowd—the most dense that I have ever seen in any church—was so jammed together, that it was with difficulty I could force my way from the vestry to the pulpit. It was an opportunity not to be lost, and I trust that it was graciously blessed of God to many that were present. During the sermon, my eye fell here and there upon some of the associates of the departed man : I knew this from his own lips, for he had named several of them : and though I would not have divulged those names, I could not forbear—when I spoke of his guilt, of his fate, and of his repentance unto life—fixing their eyes for a moment, and then plainly declaring, that some of his companions in crime were standing around me at that very time. And oh, how fervently do I still pray that each of them may prove, as he was, a brand plucked from the burning.

The wife of poor John M——n had been deeply attached to him : and his untimely death quite turned her brain. It was a piteous sight to see her, wandering about the town with her infant in her arms, and sitting upon the steps of the houses and talking about

her husband, by turns weeping, or laughing in her madness. She did not long survive her husband's execution.

Three and twenty years have passed away since that execution. I had left the country shortly after, for distant parts of England. It was only a few weeks ago, that my present school-master was passing through the picturesque church-yard of K——y where the mortal remains of John M——n lie buried. He was attracted by a head-stone, at the side of the path by which the people of the village pass to the church. He stopped to read the inscription. An aged woman was standing by the grave at the time, whose sorrowful countenance he noticed ; they fell into conversation, and she spoke to him with tears of her son's death ; and he found that she was the mother of John M——n : but her tears, he told me, were changed to smiles of pleasure, when she learnt from him, on the mention of my name, that he was living in my present parish, and was my school-master. He brought me many an affectionate message from her ; and he brought also—what I had forgotten—a printed copy of the letter, which John M——n

had sent to his wife, and which I now remember I had written on the evening before he suffered. The letter it seems, had been printed for circulation, of which I had been ignorant.

"Bury Jail, August 19, 1825.

"MY DEAR WIFE,

"I write to you for the last time, to bid you an eternal farewell. It is the Almighty's good pleasure that I should suffer the punishment due to my crime. I have been a great sinner, and acknowledge the justness of my sentence, but I hope that I am sensible of my awful situation, and have made the best use of the time that has been allowed me; and that I shall die calm and composed, trusting for pardon and forgiveness from my God through the merits and mediation of my Redeemer, Jesus Christ; and that I am leaving a world of care and sorrow, for mansions of eternal peace. I also trust that the Almighty will protect you and my poor fatherless babes. I hope that you will not grieve for me, but put your trust in God, and bring up our children in a religious way, and that they may avoid the bad snares that brought their

father to his untimely end. I hope my father and mother and all my friends will be kind to you ; and I also hope that those who were my wicked companions, and all those who are now pursuing the same evil ways that I did, will take warning by my fate. It is my wish to be buried in K——y church-yard, and that my father will let me have a grave-stone. The Rev. Mr. Tayler, who has been very, very kind to me, has promised to write my epitaph. Give my love to my poor father and mother, also to my brothers and sisters ; tell them not to grieve for me, as I hope I shall be happy in heaven. Cut off a lock of my hair, and keep it in remembrance of me. Once more I say, take care of my poor babes, and, believe me, my dying prayer will be for you and them. I forgive my prosecutor and all my enemies, and die in peace with all mankind. I hope that Thomas G——* will never forget the dreadful situation he has been in, and that wherever he may spend the remainder of his days, he may be sensible of his late wickedness, and become a good man. I have only to repeat my farewell, hoping that the Almighty God will bless you and our children,

* The felon sentenced along with M——, but reprieved.

my parents, brothers and sisters, and all my friends, and remain till death

Your affectionate Husband,

“JOHN M——N.”

A day or two before my school-master brought me this letter, when arranging some old papers, I found and opened a small sealed packet. It contained the prayer book and the cambric handkerchief which I had used at the execution: and with them was a small bone whistle, which the dying man had given me; and by which the notorious gang had been often called together to their midnight meetings, in K——y church-yard. I could but look upon that whistle, as a trophy of the victory won by the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, over the kingdom and power of Satan.

CHAPTER XI.

AMUSEMENTS.

"It was very hot at the opera last night. The pit was much crowded!" These were the first words of a friend after our salutations at meeting were over. We met in a railway carriage, and we had not seen each other for many years. He was one of the kindest and gentlest of human beings; it would grieve me to hurt his feelings by any remarks of mine, probably he has forgotten those careless words. I would fain hope that were we to meet again—and we have not met since that short interview—he would not talk about the opera. If however he should remember his remark and recognize himself, he is kind, and he will forgive me. Nay more, he will forgive my saying now, what I felt and ought

to have said then, had I been a faithful friend—namely, how pained I was to hear that he had not overcome his former love for the idle vanities of a world at enmity with God. We were both ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ. We were both no longer young men, but of some years standing in the sacred Ministry. I well remembered that within the year of my ordination, I had also once gone to the opera; but I did hope we had both learnt the sinful inconsistency of all such ways, even with the bare profession of the sacred office which we held. Those who grow in grace and godliness, must out-grow all such tastes, and abjure all such practices. “A clergyman by his character and design of life,” says Bishop Burnet, “ought to be a man separated from the cares and concerns of this world, and dedicated to the study and meditation of divine matters. His conversation ought to be a pattern for others, a constant preaching to his people. He ought to behave himself so well,” he adds, “that his own conversation may not only be without *offence*, but be so *exemplary*, that his people may have reason to conclude, that he himself does firmly believe all those things which he proposes to

them ; that he thinks himself bound to follow all those rules that he sets them, and that they may see such a serious spirit of devotion in him, that from thence they may be induced to believe that his chief design among them, is to do them good, and to save their souls ; which may prepare them so to esteem and love him, that they may not be prejudiced against anything that he does and says in public, by anything that they observe in himself in private."

A becoming and unaffected gravity is indispensable in him whose office it is to set before the people the awful realities of the things of God, and to urge upon them the claims of a Redeemer, whose own blood is the only fountain in which their guilt can be cleansed, their sin expiated. He who has received his commission to "Feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood," must, above all other men, beware of lightness ; and therefore "gravity" is especially recommended by the Apostle Paul ; 1 Tim. iii. 4, 8, both to the bishop, and to the deacon ; nay even to the wife of the minister. We can only attribute it to want of thought, when any levity of mind, or in-

consistency of life, is found in a minister of the sanctuary. But, want of thought is in itself utterly unbecoming in one who has undertaken a charge of such awful responsibility; and will not stand him in stead on that great day when the chief Shepherd shall appear, and the question will be asked; "Where is thy flock that was given thee,—thy beautiful flock?"

"We look not at the things which are seen," said the Apostle, "but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." "We walk by faith, not by sight," and "faith is the evidence of things not seen," as well as "the substance of things hoped for." If such should be the walk of every member of the church, how much more imperatively is such a walk required of him whose office it is to be, in himself, "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." Whatever may be the opinion of some clergymen themselves on this subject, the children of the world are usually clear-sighted to perceive, and sound in judgment to condemn, whatever is inconsistent between the office

and the life of the minister of the gospel. A foreign minister, who is now an elder in the church, and whom I have long known and loved for his consistent piety, told me that soon after he had entered upon the ministry, before he had realized the responsibility of his office, he was dancing on one occasion in a ball-room at Lausanne. The celebrated Madame de Staël, who was present, came up to him at the conclusion of the dance, and said to him in a low voice,—“ You will never make a good minister of the gospel—you live too much in time—a minister of Christ should live out of time ! ”

I had a college friend, a kind-hearted, but careless youth, and one whose course at Cambridge was marked by no peculiar excellence, though devoid of every thing like impropriety. After we left college, we sometimes met, and he wrote to me a long and friendly letter, in which he expressed a wish that our intercourse might continue. I had no particular wish that it should not ; but I remember saying to myself : “ Here is one who is so light-minded, that though I cannot speak otherwise of myself, his acquaintance cannot be profitable to me in any way.” I did not answer his letter :

and though I sometimes reproached myself afterwards for a want of courtesy towards him, I did not regret that our intercourse had come to an end. He had also entered the ministry. About eighteen years afterwards, we met again: and we met as friends who rejoiced to meet after a long separation. But he had not spoken many words, when I found that I was in the company of another man. The voice and the countenance were the same, but the mind and spirit were those of a renewed creature. There was a gravity and earnestness about him, which delighted, no less than it astonished me. The tone of his mind had formerly appeared to me of a commonplace description; but I now found in him that spiritual elevation, which usually imparts originality and refinement to the whole man. I saw that he was a decided and a devoted servant of Christ; and I hailed, with real joy, the renewal of our early intercourse. But, alas! it was not long to continue. But one or two letters were exchanged between us, when I heard the sad news of his sudden death. Before his departure, however, I, as well as many others, had read the remarkable account of that wondrous change

which God had wrought in him. He had printed it in the hope that the narrative might be made useful to others as careless and worldly as he had once been. No one, who had been himself the subject of such a change, could read it without feeling a deep and affectionate interest in the writer. He had, for several years after his ordination, been accustomed to mix in worldly society, and to join in worldly amusements. A young man who was under his pastoral care was considered to be in a dying state, and had been visited by him during his illness. His life was spared ; and when almost in a convalescent state, he begged to consult his minister on a subject which he told him had caused him much uneasiness during his illness. The Lord, he said, had heard his prayers : and when he considered the way in which he had spent his time before his illness, he could not think that he was restored to health in order that he might return to his former course of life, but that he might dedicate himself to the service of the Lord. He wished to learn his pastor's opinion on the subject, and to ask his guidance. My friend was as one confounded by the words of that

young man. He saw at once that it was impossible to give him any other advice but that he should follow up his own convictions, and live on his return to the world, as one who is not of the world. But he felt, that if he gave such advice, he should, in so doing, be condemning himself. He felt that he himself was still of the world ; and that whatever his words might be, his walk, if it continued what it had been, would be a direct contradiction of them. There was, however, but one thing to be done : and he told the young man that he must renounce the world : and with God's grace, follow his Divine Master through the straight gate, and in the narrow way, bearing his cross. And he went home a self-convicted man. He went home to resolve that he also, by the same divine grace, would, from that moment, give up the world, and that his life should no longer present the glaring inconsistency, which it had hitherto done, between his profession and his practice.

This resolution was not lightly made, or lightly followed up ; and he considered that under God, the change, which from that time took place in him, might be attributed to the anxious enquiry of that member of his own

flock. No sermon that he had ever preached to his congregation had been so useful or so blessed to them as the question of that member of his congregation had been to himself.

The whole course of his life from that time forth was that of a bright and shining light. His views of divine truth had become clear and experimental: his aim single: his former lightness of manner exchanged for the gravity and earnestness becoming his sacred profession. The corn was ripening for the garner: and He who had strengthened it at the root, and matured it by His genial influences, put in the sickle and gathered it into His garner.

A fact like that which I have just stated, must not be regarded as the *optional* decision of one who is at liberty to walk either in the broad or in the narrow way. To say nothing of the whole tenor and spirit of holy Scripture on this subject—and its language is alike decisive and authoritative—no clergyman of the Church of England is at liberty to follow his own will in the matter. He is solemnly exhorted at his ordination, “to consider the great excellency, and great difficulty of his office:” and “with great care and study to apply himself unto it,” “as dutifully and

thankfully unto that Lord, who hath placed him in so high a dignity." He is exhorted also "to beware neither to offend himself, nor to be the occasion that others offend." He is exhorted, "to pray earnestly for the Holy Spirit, for the will and ability that he needs, "that he may frame his life agreeably to the Holy Scriptures, and forsake and set aside all worldly cares and studies." He is charged "to apply himself wholly to this one thing, and draw all his cares and studies this way." And among the solemn questions which are put to him, and which he answers at that solemn time, I might merely bring forward the following. "Will you be diligent in prayers and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world, and the flesh?" The answer to which is: "I will endeavour myself so to do, the Lord being my helper." Again, "Will you be diligent to frame and fashion your own selves and your families according to the doctrine of Christ; and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ?"

Answer. "I will apply myself thereto, the Lord being my helper!"

What I would ask, is the meaning of these solemn engagements, these promises, made, as in the sight of God, at the most awful period of a clergyman's life, when he takes upon himself—God being his helper—the weighty responsibilities of the office of a minister of Christ? The man who means not to fulfil the duties he undertakes on this occasion, and yet calls God to witness that he does mean so to do, is taking God's name in vain to a degree which it is almost frightful to contemplate. He is in fact a minister of the sanctuary profanely and deliberately breaking the third commandment of the moral law. And the man who does take the engagement upon himself in earnest, and afterwards in utter unconcern is false to his vows, stands before God and the people, a perjured man. Let the idle flutterer in a ball-room, the more sedate, but equally dissipated card-player, the frequenter of the play-house, or of the race course, remember their office, and for decency sake, if on no higher principle, cease to be a scandal to their sacred profession, not only in the eyes of their congregation, but of the

world at large. These are not light matters, however lightly they may be regarded ; they stamp a man either with the character of a hireling, or of one whose whole ministerial life is one awful inconsistency. They lower his tone in the pulpit, and degrade his office when out of it. He comes forth to the charge of the cure of the immortal souls of perishing creatures, professing himself to have been called by the Holy Ghost, and under a commission by which he stands engaged to a perpetual warfare with the world ; and yet he is found in the midst of its votaries and its vanities, basking in its smiles, and courting its favours, with a total disregard of that plain declaration of the word of God : “ The friendship of the world is enmity with God : for he that will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God.” Let no one say, that I am speaking here of what was common among the clergy of another generation, but is now of rare occurrence. It is, I rejoice to think, less common than it once was : but I speak advisedly when I affirm, that such instances are fearfully common ; and even among amiable and highly respectable men, of whom one would fain hope better things ; men who make

the grievous mistake of supposing that by lowering their standard, and making concessions, they shall succeed in winning over the worldly to religion, but who are in fact, putting their own vain wisdom in direct opposition to the wisdom of God. I speak as an elder, and from my own experience, as having, when a young man, fallen into the same error, when I assure my younger brethren that the worldly were never won over in this manner; and that they will find that, let them make what concessions they will, they will only have left their own vantage-ground, to make advances which the world will never come forward an inch to meet. The more godly decision they shew on every occasion, tempered by that gentle sweetness which becomes those who are directed to instruct in meekness those who oppose themselves; the more they will win the respect of, and the more likely they will be even to win over their bitterest adversaries. On all such points—I speak from experience—I would assure my reader, that there is nothing that will clear his way so easily, or so effectually, as decision. I could bring forward instances if I pleased, when, having been placed in such circum-

stances, I have found the gentle firmness of a decided *No*, bring me through difficulties which could not have been cleared by any other course. Many a young clergyman is at times placed in situations where it is extremely difficult, without appearing over scrupulous, or seeming to cast reflections upon others, to avoid partaking in some worldly dissipation, or doubtful amusement:—let this be his secret test: “Is this thing of the world, or is it not?” and then let this be his open avowal: “If it is of the world, I can have nothing to do with it.”

But putting all other considerations out of the question—one thing must be evident, that the Minister of Christ—who is required by his high commission to be the most earnest and diligent of all men, should not have time for such trifling recreations. If he is fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, in all things which belong to his sacred calling, he cannot, and he will find that he cannot, have time for them.

I remember a blunt honest tradesman who was apt to speak his mind in no very courteous way, making a remark which, alas, had too much truth in it. “If a clergyman goes driving about the country, Sir, to balls and

parties, as Mr. —— does, he can't have time to prepare his sermons ; and then, Sir, he lies a-bed till nine or ten in the morning, and when he has been dancing half the night, he can't be stirring about his work till a late hour in the day, so that he cannot give proper time to his other duties."

We are always subject to be exposed to such remarks, and we little know how often they are made ; how often the simplest and even the best intentions are liable to be misunderstood and misrepresented. This is part of our cross, which we must resolutely take up when we engage to occupy the position which we do. We should therefore be doubly careful, not only lest our good be evil spoken of, but lest that which ought to be good be evil, and so, being justly censured, we bring a scandal upon our profession.

"No man can serve two masters." This is a point of doctrine which almost all clergymen are wont to preach from their pulpits. But it is lamentable to think that any man who has been upholding this high and holy maxim in his sermon, should come down from his pulpit to make it evident to all, that he is continually attempting to unite the two opposite services,

and to say by the whole tenor of his life, "*I can*;" when God says: "*Thou canst not*."

There are occasions when a clergyman will feel it his duty to enter into society; but on such occasions the rule of a devoted German minister, should be his rule: "I will never go into society but to get good, or to do good."

I do not forget the quiet observation of a Christian lady. She was speaking of a clergyman whom she had met one evening for the first time. "I was disappointed," she said mildly, "for I heard not a single remark from his lips during the whole time that I was in his company, by which a stranger might have known that he was a minister of Christ."

I have the high privilege of being well acquainted with many clergymen, from whose minds the deep consciousness seems never at any time absent, whose they are, and whom they serve; and "who exhibit on all occasions that indescribable propriety, that modest dignity, that gentleness and serenity, which is derived from the habitual exercise of their profession;"* and who seem, I may add, to come down from communion with God, not with a divine lustre, as in the case of Moses,

* "*Evans's Bishopric of Souls*."

actually shining "from the skin of their faces;" but with a spirituality of look, and word, and manner, as evidently declaring its divine source. I am not speaking of a look or a manner which has been merely assumed for the occasion, but of that spirit which cannot be put on—that which is the clear shining forth of the effulgence from within—that which is unaffected, genuine, real, and which should make ministers of Christ to be living Epistles, known and read of all men; the spirit indeed of those, who are wise to win souls, wise in that wisdom which is from above, and which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits. The minister of Christ must never forget his character and calling, and must do his utmost to prevent others forgetting them. As Cecil remarks—"The man who is seeking a heavenly country, will shew the spirit of one whose conversation is there. He will do more—with the meekness of wisdom, which distinguished his divine Master, he will seize every opportunity to win all with whom he associates, to seek that better country. He will seem to say to every one, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." In ano-

ther place the same admirable writer says, "Bring before your friends the extreme childishness of a sinful state. Treat worldly amusements as puerile things. People of the world are sick at heart of their very pleasures,—nay, they weary themselves for very vanity. There is something in religion when rightly apprehended, that is masculine and grand ; it removes these little desires which are "the constant hectic of a fool." It raises men to an eminence, from whence their once-bounded view is extended, and where they breathe a fresh and bracing atmosphere. It enlarges the narrow mind, and gives a death-blow to prejudice and its parent, ignorance.

But to turn from the mere vanities and idle dissipations of an ungodly world, for the love of which no possible excuse can be furnished by one whose calling is as sacred as it is solemn—it should be ever borne in mind by the minister of Christ, with regard to more intellectual pursuits, that whatever the talents or the tastes of the man may be, if that man is a minister of our blessed Lord, neither his talents nor his tastes should be permitted in any way to interfere with his holy profession. In him, above all other men, should be seen a

singleness of purpose, and a devotedness of spirit to one grand object. He cannot indeed have entered into any real conception of his high calling unless he has learnt to regard it, as containing in itself a source of the most absorbing interest, and the most exalted delights. He *could not*, if he might, prefer his favourite classics, or his sketch-book, or his musical instrument, or his laboratory, or his farm, or his garden, to the glorious work of seeking out Christ's sheep in the wilderness of this lost world. It *may* be seen by others that he might have been distinguished as a scholar, or as a poet, or as a mathematician, or as a painter, or as an agriculturist—but it *must* be seen that he is a clergyman—a man of one pursuit, of one book, and that book the Holy Bible. It must be evident to all that Jesus has met him, as He met the fishermen on the lake of Galilee, and said unto them, "Follow me ;" and that like those highly-favoured men, he has left all to obey the call, and to follow his Divine Master.

Both in the pulpit and in society it is, or ought to be, expected of the ministers of Christ, that they are there to raise the tone and to refine the tastes of those around them. If

this is not their aim—an aim which they are always earnestly pursuing, what are they good for? “Ye are the salt of the earth,” said our blessed Lord, “but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?—it is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill, but men cast it out.”

With regard to the recreation which is in character with the sacred profession of a clergyman, I do not think it necessary to speak more particularly. There can be no doubt that there ought not to be a possibility of a question raised on the subject. The man who has taken upon himself the humble, holy vocation of a pastor of Christ's flock, has no right to assume to himself the option of living the life of a man of the world. He has no option, but to seek—God being his helper—to be ever following his Divine Master in the way in which He walked, as well as ever pointing Him out as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. “The parson,” says George Herbert. “is generally sad, because he knows nothing but the cross of Christ; or if he have any leisure to look off from thence, he meets continually with two most sad spectacles—sin and misery—God dishonoured

every day, and man afflicted." Christ was indeed 'The man of sorrows!'—as Howells beautifully remarks—"Sorrow was His element, because sin was ours!" "I am crucified with Christ," said the great Apostle, "nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." The minister of Christ is therefore often sorrowful, "as sorrowful yet always rejoicing;" but what is that rejoicing which is thus, as it were, the twin-sister of his godly sorrowfulness, and ever in fellowship the one with the other? Surely it is raised far, far above the vain and painted pleasures, and the worthless dissipations of a perishing world. It is the calm, sweet cheerfulness of one who lives in the delightful enjoyment of that peace which the world cannot give. I have seen much of the unhappiness, and much of the happiness, of human life, but the happiest men I have ever met with, the most uniformly cheerful—I thank God I could name many such—have been ministers of Christ. They have seemed to have the exhortation of the inspired Apostle ever before them, "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say

rejoice : let your moderation be known unto men ; the Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God : and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus." They have realized, above most other men, the descriptive maxim of the same Apostle—"To be spiritually-minded is life and peace !"

CHAPTER XII.

A MEMORIAL OF GOD'S MERCIFUL PROVIDENCE.

THE evening of the Lord's Day is peculiarly a time of rest to His ministers ; for the day itself, though a day of rest to others, is a serving-day to us. Joyful and blessed our serving is, but it is often laborious and fatiguing. At no time does the cheerful quietness of my family circle seem so delightful to me as on the evening of the Lord's Day.

The evening prayers were over, and our family party had separated for the night. I remained alone after every one had retired to rest, that I might see if the doors and shutters were closed, and the house in safety. As I stood in one of the passages I heard that the deep stillness of the night was broken in upon by the sudden rising of the wind. A door in the court yard was slamming so violently that

I went out to close it, and I found that the wind had begun to blow a gale ; but as our residence stood high, and open to the south west, there seemed to me nothing unusual in the loud and sweeping wind which blew warmly and strongly over my face.

Before I retired to my own chamber I went, as I usually do, to give a passing look to the children of the household.

By the side of one of the youthful slumbers I lingered for some minutes. He was then the youngest of the family, and a younger brother's child. My mother stood beside me—for he slept in the dressing-room adjoining her chamber—and shading the light I carried with my hand, we looked down on the calm sweet countenance of the sleeping boy. There is something very lovely to me in the innocent security of a child's repose, the cheek so delicately flushed on the side pressing the pillow, the eyelids so lightly closed, and the soft regular breathing just parting the rosy lips. I rather touched than clasped the little hand, carelessly resting on the pillow, and more than once I stooped down to kiss the soft cheek of the unconscious child, so tenderly loved by us all. As I turned away I

heard the roar of the tempest from without ; but all was peaceful in the hushed stillness and the soft gloom within.

It was impossible to sleep, nor could I wish to sleep during that awful night, and yet I was too fatigued not to feel at times almost overcome with drowsiness. The wind became louder and mightier in its force ; never had I heard such long terrific blasts. At times there came a long, long pause of deep and awful stillness, as if the tempest were collecting its strength—like the string of a bow strained back, or the mountain-billow drawn down to its lowest depths, and thus gathering force to rise to a towering height, and to burst with overwhelming power—and then the blast came rushing on, and the house seemed to rock to its very foundations. Hour after hour passed, but there was no cessation of the hurricane. I thought of those who were out upon the sea, exposed to its wildest fury ; and who could do otherwise than pray for all such ? But as my spirit turned to Him, “ *who walketh upon the wings of the wind.* ” I remembered that He is as gracious as He is glorious—as merciful as He is mighty. I felt how great a privilege it is that we are permitted

and indeed invited to commend all for whom we ought to pray, to His good providence, and to His all-sufficient grace ; and it was then a high and holy delight to call upon Him, who, while "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God," came in the likeness of man, and lived and died among men, sharing our griefs and carrying our sorrows.

I thought of Him asleep in the midst of the storm, and I could not help, like the fearful disciples, entreating Him to rebuke the tempest, and say, as He said in answer to their prayer, "Peace, be still." Oh the blessed, blessed privilege to have such a Refuge, such a Saviour ! so gentle, so sympathizing, so human a friend ! Still the storm continued, when suddenly there came one heavy thundering crash, which seemed to fall upon the house. What it was, and where it was, I knew not—but I did not stop to think of what or where, for I found myself rushing forward to the chamber of the child I had left some hours before sleeping so softly. As I sprung up the stairs, a bell rang violently, and then I heard the sound of feet rushing backwards and forwards, and loud, frantic shrieks. I was in time, and perhaps only just in time.

I found my mother struggling with all her strength to force her way into the dressing-room where the child slept. When the crash came, the partly-closed door had suddenly shut. She could just open it, and was able to see the situation of the child, and hear his cries of terror ; but all her efforts to enter the room were in vain. My sister had also sought the room, and had rushed round to the other door, which opened into the passage, and she was using all her strength to burst it open, but in vain ; the door had been locked from within, and resisted all her efforts. Never shall I forget the whole scene as it then appeared—never shall I cease to shudder when I think of the situation in which I found the child—the roof rent wide open to the sky, and the heavy masses of brick and timber tumbling about me, and the wind, sweeping in, and bellowing with its mighty voice ; and the troubled moonlight shewing to me in the further corner the couch of the child almost buried in the ruins. I heard his piteous cries, and they brought joy to my heart, for I thought at first that all was over, that he had been crushed beneath the frightful ruins. He also heard my voice, and called upon me by my

name ; and with a desperate effort, which seemed easy to me at the time, I forced back the door, which the falling mass had almost closed, I sprang forward, and was permitted to reach the child. Just sufficient space was left for me to draw him forth, for the rubbish was as high as his chest. In a moment I had borne him from the room, and placed him in my mother's arms unhurt. I had no sooner reached the adjoining room, than there came another dreadful crash—the whole of the roof and chimneys and ceiling, as I afterwards found, had fallen in. But the child was safe, and we were blessing God with him in our arms, as we hastened with him to a place of greater safety.

Blessed be God's holy name ! this was but one instance among many more, of the mercies of His providence on that eventful night, *that night to be much observed* in our recollections of His goodness, and our thanksgivings for His deliverances !

When I afterwards visited that chamber, I found it a ruinous heap of brickwork and timber, bared to the open sky. The beam which had been snapped in the middle, hung slanting just above the bed of the child, and a

few large heavy slates were still suspended over the spot where his fair head had been lying, —a broad mass of the ceiling had fallen, like a smooth canopy, upon the wooden parapet which surrounded his Indian crib, and under it his tender limbs had been so gently shielded, that the bed-clothes had not even been pressed down. But on the pillow, just where his head had rested, a joist had since fallen, and would, probably, have struck his temple with a fatal blow.

From that same room a large and heavy wardrobe had been removed only the night before, which otherwise must have been forced through the ceiling, and have inevitably fallen on another youthful sleeper in the room beneath. It had been also proposed, not long before, to move the crib of the child to another side of the room, to the very spot where the whole weight of the chimneys had fallen, and where he must have been crushed to death. But it was His will who hath said, "There shall not an hair of your head perish," to preserve us in safety during that awful night. He had seemed to whisper this gracious assurance during those hours of danger. One of our family circle assured me

that at the awful crisis of the tempest, she heard those very words ;—"There shall not an hair of your head perish!" spoken distinctly as by a human voice, in her ears. I know few persons less superstitious than she is—but she declared she never heard any words more distinctly spoken. How fervently do I pray, that all we who were spared, may live to shew forth His praise, not only as we did then, with our lips, but in our lives.

One reflection has been often present to my mind, when thinking on that tremendous storm,—that the power, beneath which we all trembled in so helpless a state, was *an unseen power*. There is, in fact, nothing of all the wonders in the mysterious world where God has placed us, endued with such mighty force as the invisible air around us ; and yet its presence is the gentlest, the most welcome, the most sweetly refreshing to man. The delicate flower upon the sheltered bank would droop its head, and its tender leaves would be folded and shrunk in death, if unvisited by the playful breeze. We throw open the casement and draw back the curtains in the sick-room, that the soft air may come and breathe over the languid sufferer ; and how often does the

prisoner in his dismal dungeon raise himself to the narrow window of his cell, and lay his fevered brow against the bars, that he may draw in some grateful draughts of the fresh open air for which he often gasps in vain. The common air is, perhaps, the best, the sweetest, and the dearest blessing God has given us here below. In it, to take a low, but I am sure a devout view of the subject, the mortal man may be said to "live, and move, and have his being." Let it be withdrawn for a short season, and the living man becomes a hideous corpse. There is One, my Christian readers, who is the very fountain of wisdom, and by His sacred word He has Himself taught us to see in the commonest things of earth, images of the highest and holiest things of heaven. And as He has likened the second person of the eternal Godhead to the resplendent sun, which gives light and heat to all men; so has He set before us, by the image of the air which we breathe, the third person of the same glorious Godhead; giving us some faint idea of the ineffable gentleness of His influences, and the irresistible mightiness of His power. Yes, from the very lips of Him, who spake as never man spake, the infusion of

spiritual life, in His own way, and at His own seasons, is thus simply but exquisitely described, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit." He is the Lord and giver of life, and if you, my reader, have not been brought to acknowledge this ; if you have not been taught by the word, and by the Spirit, that he only is a child of God who hath been born from above, there is no life in you. The great danger of all, in a nation of professing Christians, is this, that every one is apt to think himself already a Christian, without looking within, to see if the death unto sin, and the new birth and life unto righteousness have been already experienced there. Oh let us all remember, that although it may seem to us that we are permitted to trifle with the gentle influences of Him who is the Lord and giver of life, there will be no resisting His arm when He puts forth His power, and "arise to shake terribly the earth."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WRITTEN WORD.

ABOUT ten years ago, when at H——t, a peculiar and difficult case occurred to me ; one, in which I felt that to attempt anything in the usual way would most certainly put an end to every hope of success. I prayed for direction from above, and my prayer was graciously answered.

In one of my walks through a beautiful lane, at a point where two roads meet, I observed that part of a field by the roadside was cleared for building. Soon after a small, but comfortable house had arisen there. I inquired of a neighbour, who was to be the future resident of that pleasant dwelling ; and was told that a Mr. D—— had bought the land and built the house ; and that he intended it for his own residence. I was natu-

rally anxious to learn something of the character of my future parishioner. Little was said, and that little in a kindly spirit ; but all that I heard was bad, and most discouraging. Common report, as I soon after learnt, agreed with the information which I had received as to the character of Mr. D——. He was possessed of sufficient property to render him independent of the world ; but he was said to be a man who had made himself universally feared and disliked by his violent and overbearing temper,—a bold, insolent, and, if I remember rightly, an intemperate man, and a blasphemer. I was told, and told truly, that he took a pride in insulting every one in a superior station to his own, particularly a clergyman ; that he never entered the doors of a church, but that he sometimes went to a Dissenting chapel, though in fact he was the very opposite to a religious man in every sense ; and that if he called himself at any time a Dissenter, he did so to show his hatred to the Church. Some months after, I saw him standing in the middle of the road before his door. The house, I perceived, had been opened as a beer-shop, and there stood its landlord,—a stout, strongly-built man about

fifty years of age, with a countenance not commonly repulsive,—a self-willed, reckless man, under whom, I could not help feeling, all the evils belonging to a beer-shop were likely to rise to a fearful excess. The house soon became notorious for the riotous character of its guests, and many of the parishioners complained of the noisy and drunken parties which were assembled there, particularly on Sunday evenings, when the loud shouts and coarse peals of laughter of those intemperate revellers were often heard from a considerable distance, breaking upon the Sabbath stillness of the green and quiet lanes.

But this state of things was not to continue long. The master of the beer-shop was suddenly attacked by a dangerous illness, which reduced him in a short time to a state of great debility. His constitution, as it soon appeared, had received a shock from which he never rallied. I heard of his illness, and determined, if possible, to see him. He would not bear to be spoken to, I was told; he would repulse me; he might even insult me. He professed to be a Dissenter, and would deem my visit an intrusion, or make that an excuse for declining my visits. I only felt that he was a

poor, sinful fellow-creature, and that he was drawing nigh to the end of his guilty and wretched course. I determined to make the effort, and to look to God for his guidance and his blessing. I knocked at the door of the beer-shop. It was opened by the mistress of the house, a person of pleasing appearance and gentle manners. She replied to my request that I might see her husband, by leading me to a small parlour at the back of the kitchen.. There she left me with the sick man. He was lying on an old sofa, and was evidently very ill, though not much altered in appearance. He met my inquiries as to his health with an abrupt and bare civility. I sat down near a table at some distance from him, and opening my Bible, which I had brought with me, I said quietly, "If you please, I will read to you." I know not whether he replied, but I did not hesitate to do as I had said I would. I read part of the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke. I closed the book without a single comment, and I knelt down. The prayer I offered up was short and simple ; it touched upon the guilt and the sin common to him and to myself, upon the willingness of the Lord our

Redeemer to receive sinners, and his power to forgive our sins. I prayed that God would give us grace, under every trial, to say, "Thy will be done." I rose from my knees and left the room. How he had received my visit I knew not. I did not seek to know. I had been tolerated ; but whether he had attended to the inspired words which I had read, whether he had joined in my prayer, I could not tell.

The next evening I repeated my visit, and I read to him the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Again I prayed, and again I departed in silence. For many days I persevered in the same course ; scarcely a word passed between us, but his short reply to the few kind words in which, on entering the room, I expressed my sympathy with his sufferings, and made some inquiry about his health. I continued to read such portions of the Word of God as I felt to be most applicable to his state ; but I offered not a single remark of my own. I prayed, and left him. I thought that once or twice I could perceive a slight change in his manner, but my own manner was unaltered ; kind, but distant. My words were few, I asked no question, I seemed to take no notice.

I prayed often, but secretly. I looked to God, and God alone, to speak by His own word. I felt that I must leave the event entirely to Him. For nearly a fortnight, with the occasional interruption of a day, I continued these visits.

How can I describe the deep inward joy of my heart, the gratitude of my whole soul to Him who heareth prayer, and blesseth means, when on one evening, as I was about to depart as usual, I was entreated not to go. The voice that met my ear was broken and subdued ; the hard expression of that bold bad countenance was gone ; the strongholds of Satan had given way, and he who had hardened himself in his ungodliness and sin during a long course of resistance to every inward conviction, had become gentle and teachable as a little child. He grasped my hand, his eyes were filled with tears. He spoke of his gratitude and affection for me. All this I saw with deep emotion, and yet all this was as nothing to me ; I saw also that which I felt to be alone of importance, of real, unspeakable importance,—I saw that he was penetrated to his very soul with a sense of his own awful guilt before God !

When the first burst of his grief and shame had somewhat subsided, and he could speak more calmly, he told me that he was a wonder to himself. He could scarcely understand the marvellous change which had taken place within him. "It is of God," I said, "and it is wonderful, as are all His works, and all His ways. What hath God wrought; for He, and He alone, hath wrought this wonderful change? I have not spoken a word; it is God who hath spoken, God who hath done this." "Yes," he said thoughtfully, and after a pause of silence, "I see it now; and I may tell you, Sir, that if you had spoken one word—addressed but a single word of your own to me, when you first came to me, or for some time after, I could not, and I would not have borne it; weak as I was, I should have risen up and tried, even by force, to turn you out of my house. I was astonished at your daring to come to me; but you took me altogether by surprise. I could not be angry when you called and asked, with such a kind voice, after my health; though your coming displeased me. You sat down and read to me those beautiful words: I knew they were not your words, but God's own words, and I was silent.

You shut the book, and I thought you would begin to reproach me, and tell me what a sinful wretch I was, and then would be my time to speak ; but I looked up and saw you on your knees, and heard you praying to God Almighty for me, and then, without another word, you were gone." Thus it was that he spoke ; I recal, as well as I am able, some of the words which he said, but I cannot do justice to them. He was a man of strong and superior mind, and well educated for his station. I learnt from him, on my next interview, that before he came to H——t, some years before, when residing at ——,—he had taken offence at something that had occurred between himself and the clergyman of the parish, and had grossly insulted him. He had always been a man of strong passions, and of a violent, ungoverned temper. "Before that time," he said, "if I went anywhere I went to church ; but I then made up my mind never again to enter the doors of a church. For the hatred I bore my own clergyman, I swore a deadly hatred to all clergymen, and when I saw you, I hated you because you were a clergyman. I longed for an opportunity to insult you. I feared no man, and nothing

would have given me greater pleasure (I use his exact words) than to have shaken my fist in a clergyman's face. Every thing went well with me in this world," he said, on another occasion, "I succeeded in my business; I had plenty of money, as much or more than I wished for. I was independent of the world. I had strong health. I am not old, and I thought that I had many years to live. I bought this piece of ground. I built this house to my own liking, and I came here to enjoy myself, and live at my ease for many years. All at once I found myself laid low, my strength and my health gone, my money of no use to me, my house built, but not for me to live many more months in. All my favourite plans had come to pass. I had not a wish ungratified. But what good had I got? of what use was all to me? I was unable to enjoy anything. I was about to be taken away from all. I was a dying man. My heart was heavy enough, Sir, as you may suppose, but it was full of bitterness and anger against God—affliction did not soften me. You came; and, as I told you, if you had spoken one word to lecture me, even in a kind way, or, I may say, *one word of your own* as

to my state, which I expected you would do, I would have turned you out of my house."

Ah! my reader, "what had God wrought?" His word is truly the "sword of the Spirit, quick, powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword—piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." "Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Is it not also, "as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass?" The powerful and the gentle influences of that wonderful word had been brought to bear upon the mass of resistance in the heart of that bold, bad man. No power short of the power of God, however, can change the heart of fallen man. There is the same natural and radical opposition to the things of God in the heart of the gentlest, and the kindest human being, as in that of the most stern and savage. The carnal mind, under all its disguises, is the same—it is enmity to God. If any of my readers are sensible of mild and kindly affections, and of their own gentleness of disposition, but at the

same time conscious that God is not in their thoughts—that their chief desire is not to please Him in all things—that they neither love Him nor seek to love Him with their whole heart—that, in a word, the precepts of His word are not the principles of their lives, let them not conclude that the state of Mr. D—— was necessarily more desperate than their own.

The hours which I afterwards passed with that once obdurate and violent man were many, and they were among the happiest and the most profitable I have ever spent. He loved me with all the warmth of his strong affections ; but his love for me, much as I valued it, was of little moment,—I saw that he loved God with his whole heart. He knew, he believed, that God loved him, that he had given his own Son to suffering and to shame and to death for him. Never have I witnessed a deeper sense of guilt and sin and utter vileness and worthlessness than in that man ; never a more earnest desire to be delivered from the pollution and the power of sin. He was thoroughly aware that he had long been the bondsman of Satan, and he often spoke of his anxious desire to be entirely freed from

his hellish power. One evening I found him lying on his bed in a state of quiet, but awe-struck thoughtfulness. His look and manner were peculiarly solemn. I had often spoken to him of that great and inspired assurance, those commands and promises so inimitably linked together for our instruction in righteousness. (James iv. 7, 8.) "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you."—"He has been here and I have had a severe conflict;" he said, looking earnestly upon me as I entered, the Evil One has assaulted me sharply, but I have been enabled to resist him. God has been with me too. God is on my side, and in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ I have conquered."

I do not dwell, however, on the state of this remarkable man, after it pleased God to turn him from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. His conversion was unquestionable, and satisfactory in every sense. His repentance was evidenced not only by a godly sorrow, but by the energy of a new and spiritual life. He had become jealous for the honour of God, and during the short time of his sojourn on earth, he endeavoured to

serve Him with his whole heart, and with his whole house. One Sunday evening he said to me, "I hope, Sir, that you found no one drinking below. I am afraid that my wife is inclined to admit some of our former customers. She knows that I will not allow it, but, I am sorry to say, I mistrust her. I have told her plainly that it shall not be. The Lord's-day shall be kept sacred in this house, and the doors shall not be opened. I cannot go down to see that she obeys me in this ; but as long as I live, I will be master in my own house ; and when I am gone I trust she will attend to my desire."

I was called away from home some days before his death, to take leave of one of my brothers who was about to sail for India ; when I returned, and before I entered my own doors, I went to the house of my dying friend. He did not know me. Death was now very near. I knelt beside his bed. I could no longer pray *with* him, but I could still pray for him, and commend his departing spirit into the hands of that great and glorious God, who had so wonderfully called him by his grace, and revealed his Son in him. It was a lovely day in the early part of summer. The trees

were clothed with their full foliage, but still in all the brightness of their freshest green; the birds were singing their wild, sweet songs among the branches; the banks and hedgerows were bright with the rich rose-coloured blossoms of the campion, and the lovely blue of the germander; these, and many other flowers were there in gay profusion, and all was steeped in a flood of glorious sunshine, while the soft fresh breeze brought with it on its fitful breathings the exquisite fragrance of a field of bean-blossoms. I had left the chamber of death, and I was walking slowly and thoughtfully homeward, and the contrast of the scene without to that melancholy chamber, filled me with sadness. I turned to look again towards the friend whom I had left. There stood the pleasant dwelling which he had built, and there was the window of the room in which that once proud, sinful man lay dying. His hopes of earthly happiness were all faded, and he himself lay gasping in the struggles of death. In a little while all that would remain of him on earth would be but an unsightly and corrupting corpse. But why was I sad? There were no bands in his death. The sting of death was not there. The re-

deemed and rescued spirit would soon be free. The earthly house of that fleshly tabernacle would be dissolved, and he would be absent from the body to be present with the Lord.

There is a passage of the inspired word—one full of comfort to the minister and preacher of that word—I saw its accomplishment before me. My readers will find it in the fifty-fifth chapter of the book of the prophet Isaiah. The Lord God is speaking, and speaking of his word. He describes the effect of the rain and the snow which came down from heaven upon the natural earth—in the springing blade, and the bud, and the harvest fruitage, by which seed is given to the sower and bread to the eater, and he says, “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it:”—I could not be sad. I went on my way rejoicing.

CHAPTER XIV.

TRANSFORMING GRACE.

ONE of the most affecting comments perhaps ever made on a well-known portion of the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, was given by a poor African woman, a newly awakened convert to the Christian faith. She had come from the interior of the country of the Bechuana tribes, and was one of the first thirty disciples of our blessed Lord in that once dark and barren wilderness. She had been but during two months an enlightened and converted believer, but she realized the description given by the sacred historian of the gentle Lydia—"whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."

She came to the Missionary on the morning after one of their Missionary prayer-

meetings—She came and said, “I have somewhat to say.” Her teacher encouraged her to do so. She hesitated—Her modest diffidence needed more encouragement, and she received it. She said, “I was going to talk to you about the word of God—I could not understand you last night. I never heard the word of God as I did last night.” I asked, said the Missionary, “what struck her particularly.” “Oh ;” she replied, “I could not understand it ; it was not what I had heard before.” The eleventh chapter of Isaiah was altogether a new subject to this young woman. She said, “I have been thinking about it all night, I could not sleep.” “I asked,” he continues, “whether it was that portion which I had expounded, or that which I had only read !” She replied, “what you unfolded, I understood, I could not go wrong, because you put words into my ears. It was what you did not expound.” He had only expounded the first five verses of the chapter. He asked ; “What was it !” A tenacious memory enabled her to repeat nearly the very words she had heard. “‘The wolf shall lie down with the lamb.’ I do not know,” she said, ‘what kind of wolves they are in your

of mine ?' Ah, she was a noble commentator !

But we need not go to Africa, we need not turn to some newly-awakened savage for an illustration of that glorious prophecy of the transforming influence of the grace of God, on hearts as hard and natures as fierce as those of the lion of the desert. In the bosom of our own church, in this most blest and civilized of Christian lands, the same wild passions, the same unholy violence may too often be found ; and here, where we have "light on every side ;" to use the words of the African woman ; there can be, alas, no light within, till the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, hath shined in the heart ; and the transforming power of the grace of God hath renewed the spirit after the image of Christ.

I have been the honoured witness of many such wondrous changes ; and a striking instance now occurs to me.

During a period of six months, at the request of my diocesan the Bishop of W——, I agreed to take the temporary charge of a parish in H——shire. It was a small town in one of the loveliest parts of England ; and

had been under the pastoral care of a truly devoted and faithful minister of Christ. But his health was delicate, and he had broken down under his arduous duties, and was ordered by his medical attendant, to seek rest and change of scene for a time, in order that he might recruit his exhausted powers. Among the members of his flock, whom he especially mentioned to me, before his departure, there was one gentleman in whom he felt a peculiar interest. But after describing to me his state of mind, and his rapidly declining health, for he was apparently in the last stage of a consumption, he added with a sigh of melancholy regret ; ‘ But it would be almost useless for you to attempt to see him. I believe he is now in earnest about his soul, but his natural character is peculiar, and I think he would not see you.’ I resolved, however, to make the attempt to see him, though I felt convinced from what my brother Minister had told me, and from other remarks which he made as to the peculiar disposition of the sick man, that anything which he might construe into an attempt to force myself upon him, would defeat my object. The way that I took was a very simple one ! I called daily at his door, and begged

he might be told that I had come to enquire after his health. My plan succeeded. After a few of those daily calls, the servant told me that her master had desired her to say, if I called again, that he hoped I would come up to see him. I was taken to his chamber. It was a lovely day in May, and I found the sick man seated by a window which looked out over the pleasant garden attached to his house.

I sat down beside him ; and, when my first greeting was over, I made some remark about that pleasant garden, and the wild and lovely country which we could see beyond it. With an air of the deepest sadness, he said, "The trees and plants are all bursting into leaf and flower, but before they are clothed in their full foliage, I shall be in my grave. I shall see them no more." It was but the passing regret of the mere natural man. I soon learned, from his conversation, that his heart was yearning for a better, brighter state, and for a place where the leaves and flowers change not as a fleeting summer-season passes away. I soon found, that though troubled at intervals by doubts, and disturbed by fears, he was looking unto Jesus with a glorious faith

in His finished redemption and His perfect righteousness. I soon saw that he had been truly regenerated by the word and the Spirit of God, and had passed from death unto life, though still in this body of death and corruption.

Many were the interviews which I afterwards had with him, and deep was the interest which he awakened in me. He was a remarkable man—a clear-headed decided character; he had always been so. What he did, he did heartily and resolutely, but he had been, not long before, a bold and violent opposer of the truth; hating and despising it, and all who held it. His spirit was naturally proud and overbearing in no common degree, his temper fiery, and many of his neighbours had accustomed themselves to yield to his insulting conduct, rather than provoke his resentful violence. So brutal and overbearing had he been, that it was said, and I believe truly, that because his wife, a very gentle and amiable person, whose appearance and manners were peculiarly pleasing, was lame and walked with some difficulty, she had been forbidden by him to walk to church. He did not choose that an infirmity, which in fact created an

interest in her, but which he fancied might be remarked upon, should be seen by others. He had been an officer in the navy, and was still a young man, but the lines of his countenance shewed what its expression had once been. He owed any thing that made existence happiness, under God, he told me, to the instruction of that faithful preacher of the gospel, whose place I then occupied, and who had first mentioned him to me. For a long time he had never entered the church-doors, nor even seen the minister of his parish, but in the streets. On one occasion, he said, he had stopped Mr. M—— in the market-place, and with a loud voice and brutal manner, in the midst of the farmers, (for it was market-day,) he had called out, ‘I wish to know the reason, Sir, why you do not call on me. You call, I know, upon my neighbours on both sides of my house, why don’t you call on me?’ But had he called I should have insulted him,” he added, “and with his delicate health and arduous duties, he was ill fitted to bear with my violence.” He had been, he then told me, stirred up to fury, by the accounts of Mr. M——’s sermons, which he had heard in the parlour of the inn, where he frequently

passed his evenings, and he had determined to seek an opportunity of calling him to account for the statements as to doctrine and practice, which that uncompromising servant of God had put forth from his pulpit. "But I will not act unfairly," he had said to himself, "I will do him justice, I will hear him myself, and I will judge for myself, before I attack him." He went to church, and the sermon which he heard Mr. M—— preach filled him with rage. This is unbearable! he thought, and I will certainly see him, and ask him how he dares to speak to us in this manner. He was scarcely able to controul his anger till the end of the service. The preacher had referred to various passages of Scripture, and his impetuous hearer had noted down some of them. With the same sense of justice, however, on which he had before acted, he said to himself, as he walked home, "I will look into the Bible, and see for myself whether those passages are there, and whether he has spoken the truth. I did so—I searched for myself;" and then fixing his eyes on me with a look of deep earnestness as he paused for a moment in his narrative. "*I did so—and it was all true!*" How solemn, how im-

pressive was the tone in which he pronounced those few words ! I thought of the words of the Apostle, " What was I that I could withstand God ! " Such was the deep inward conviction conveyed, though not uttered, by that tone, and such had been the practical effect produced through the unsought grace of the Lord God upon the whole future course of his life, by that heartfelt conviction. *It was all true ;* and God had, by His own living word, impressed that inspired truth upon the conscience of that ungodly and violent man. Now that he had been awakened from the dark dream of his whole past life, now that he had been enabled to realise his true state as a fallen and lost creature, redeemed and rescued by Him, who had come down from heaven to seek and to save His lost sheep, he was filled with anxiety for all who were still out of the way. There was one man who had been but a short time his friend and associate, one from whose companionship he had received much injury, for that man was an avowed infidel. They could not meet, for they were both confined to their sick chambers ; that man, as it happened, still nearer death than himself. He wrote, however, to his

former companion ; he told him with what horror he looked back on his own past life—how deeply he deplored his senseless opposition to the only remedy for the hopeless wretchedness of a state like theirs ! He told him what God had done for his own soul, and he entreated him to search the word of life which God had given them, and to seek for pardon and acceptance with Him through Jesus Christ, whom He had sent to save sinners, and give his life a ransom for ours. His affectionate and earnest appeal produced no impression. The man died, as he had lived ; and the news of his hopeless death was so great a shock to his former friend, in his enfeebled state, that it was some time before he was enabled in any way to recover from it.

I soon became his constant companion ; for so far from not wishing to see me, I found that he looked forward for my daily visit with a grateful affection, which went to my heart. His bodily sufferings were great, and I saw them perhaps at their height : and it was impossible to witness them without feeling, and without expressing deep sympathy. My first enquiry, on entering his room, was regarding them ; and I suppose I shewed, by

my manner, that they were not matter-of-course words that I spoke, but the importance of his spiritual state soon drew forth expressions of a far deeper interest: and one day, he said, with a look of affection, as he fixed his eyes upon me: "You, my dear friend, can, I see, enter into all my feelings: and you seem as if God had sent you to me, at the very time I needed such a friend. One of my kind visitors came and stood beside me, looking like an angel, and speaking like an angel of God; but in his earnest anxiety for my soul, he seemed altogether to forget my poor suffering bodily frame: and another, in the tenderness of his feelings, when he witnessed my severe pains, though I am sure he never forgot the interests of my immortal soul, seemed to occupy himself too much with those bodily sufferings which will soon be over. But it is so soothing, so comforting to see that both are cared for in their right degree."

Sometimes he was enabled to come down stairs, to a small quiet room at the back of his house: and one evening when I found him there, and we were quite alone, after I had read and prayed with him as usual, before I could rise from my knees, he turned to-

wards me, and said with much solemnity, and in a deep whisper;—"and now would you let *me* pray?" He took my hand, and holding it between his two clasped hands, he poured forth a prayer which seemed to come from the very depths of his heart. I have scarcely ever heard so impressive a prayer. I will not attempt to give his words from memory, but I can never forget the impression that it made on me, nor the tone and manner of him who offered it; both were expressive of the deepest sense of his own entire unworthiness and vileness before God: and at the same time, of the most perfect confidence in His love and His power who had snatched him as a brand from the burning. It was the very outpouring of the spirit of one, into the lowest depths of whose heart the infinite love of Christ had penetrated; and who had been, as he solemnly declared in that prayer, saved from the very depths of hell. He continued long in that rapt and audible communion with God; and all the time his hands were folded over mine, though he seemed unconscious of the presence of any one but that holy and heart-searching Being, to whom he was laying bare the very depths

of his soul. His faith was clear, calm, and unshaken, and he appeared to love that most gracious God whose love to him he delighted to dwell upon, with his whole heart and soul ; but I scarcely ever saw a smile upon his face. He was happy in the highest sense ; but it seemed to me that even his happiness was to his mind, too deep, too solid, too important a thing to be otherwise than solemnly regarded, for he never lost sight of what he was before God. I do not indeed remember to have met with any one so severe in his judgment of himself, or so fearful lest he should disgrace the profession which he made by even the most trifling inconsistency. One morning—it was but a day or two before his death—I found him in a state of great wretchedness. Almost his first words to me were, “I fear that I have no true religion about me after all. This very morning has witnessed an outbreak of my old bad disposition, and I begin to fear that there has been no real change in me. A message was brought to my bedside, which it would perhaps have been better that I should not have heard ; it was rude and insulting ; but it was only in accordance with my former spirit. I ought to have borne

it with meekness, and returned good for evil. But it roused my anger, and caused me to speak in a most unbecoming manner : and this has led me to ask myself whether I can possibly be a changed man, and whether all my religion is not a mere delusion ! I am a dying man, on the very brink of eternity, and have I not given proof by my intemperate conduct that I am not fit to enter into the presence of God ? ” It was not difficult with one so watchful and so searching in his dealings with himself, to assure him that while I did fully agree with him in condemning his fault, I saw at the same time, in the trouble that it occasioned him, an evidence of his utter abhorrence of all evil, and of his uncompromising spirit of resistance to the natural workings of its power within him. The heavy cloud passed away, and the solemn and peaceful calm that succeeded was never again disturbed.

The next day, I was hastily summoned to him at an early hour. He was evidently near his end. After reading and praying with him as usual, he requested his wife to bring a basin of water, and to wash his hands. He gave no explanation of what

seemed to me at the time, somewhat extraordinary ; and I asked for none. But after this was done, he fixed his eyes on me, and said : " My dear friend, will you remain with me till all is over ? " I was sitting by his bed-side, and he held out his hand, and took mine, clasping it with a gentle pressure, but saying nothing, after I had promised not to leave him. From time to time I whispered some precious assurance of his Saviour's presence, and of his Saviour's love ; and there I sat, in the hushed and solemn stillness of that quiet room ; there I sat hour after hour, scarcely speaking, fearing to disturb the profound peace which was spreading a more and more settled influence over the whole spirit of the dying man, in that, his last earthly communion with God. I saw his eyes raised with an expression of intense adoration, and his lips moving from time to time as if in inward prayer ; sometimes his eyes were fixed for a moment upon the countenance of his gentle and affectionate wife, and sometimes upon myself. But we did not speak ; we did not move : we knew not the time of his departure. His hand was still clasped in mine, and for some time, I hesitated to withdraw

my hand, till it had ceased to impart anything like warmth to the pale long fingers within its grasp: and till the contrast of colour in the two hands declared too plainly to be mistaken, that the one was that of the living, the other that of the dead. His end in every sense was peace.

Ah, was not this—the once fierce and untamed lion gazing upon the Lamb of God—that bleeding sacrifice—that meek and lovely example—till he himself was changed into the same image, and had become a lamb of His fold, and a marvel of His transforming grace!

CHAPTER XV.

THE RACE COURSE AND ITS ACCOMPANIMENTS.

AMONG the facts which, during a long course in the service of my gracious and adorable Master, have come under my own observation, and which, I trust, with His blessing, may be made useful to my readers, are many connected with races, and gambling, and the various other evils associated with the race-course. I was for ten years placed in a position where those evils—and their name is Legion, for they are many—were necessarily brought before me in all their enormity. One friend whom I respect and love, perhaps above all other friends on earth, has, on several occasions, requested me to put them together, and to publish them. He well knows the high opinion in which I hold his judgment,

and that any request of his comes almost as a command upon me.

I fully propose to publish a volume of facts on this subject, at no distant period. I have much to say on the crying evils of the whole system, and facts are the best arguments. A few of them, in the meanwhile, I shall now bring before my readers.

I could cite the testimonies of others to prove the evil of races. I could refer to brother-clergymen at Epsom and Doncaster, who have spoken to me in decided terms of the effects produced by them, in both those well-known places ; but I confine myself to the city of Chester, because I can speak from my own experience, and record facts for the truth of which I can myself vouch. The crime, the sorrow, the ruin, the deaths which I have witnessed ; the lamentations which I have heard, are not to be forgotten ; and I would add, with all Christian gentleness, but with all Christian faithfulness, they must not be kept back. I can well conceive that many who defend and promote the evils of which I speak, have been ignorant of these things : but I have not been ignorant, and at the risk of displeasing some kind and friendly persons,

who I fear do not desire to have their eyes opened, I must record my faithful testimony. Perhaps there is no place in England in which the evils of the race-course are so mixed up with the population of the place as the city of Chester: the race-course may be said to form part of the place. There is no need, as in other towns, to go even a short distance to be a spectator of the proceedings; a person standing on the western walls of the town has the whole race-course spread out at his very feet. During the last few years, owing to the exertions of a worthy magistrate of the place, at the time that he was mayor, the first day of the race was altered from the Monday to the Tuesday, to avoid the awful profanation of the Lord's day with which that week commenced. Before that change took place, the tumult in the streets, even during divine service, was so great, that it was a continual interruption to the congregations assembled in the churches. I have been jostled almost off the steps which led from my own church-door, as I descended them, by a crowd of ill-mannered fellows, who came up arm in arm, one of the party puffing the smoke of his cigar in my face: and the sab-

bath evening, in that ancient Christian city, presented, on every side, scenes that would have been disgraceful even to a heathen land. Carriages of all sorts came rolling into the town, during the whole of the Lord's day; and there were sights and sounds on every side, as the night drew in, ill suited to the Christian Sabbath; drunkards reeling and shouting about the streets, or vomiting in the corners of them, and the inns and public-houses of all sorts, filled to overflowing with noisy and ungodly revellers. There was, a few years ago, one room in my own parish, which has been so crowded by the mixed multitude of gamblers assembled there, that the men sat on one another's knees; and there hundreds and thousands of pounds were betted and taken; and not only there, but in every quarter of the old city, the gambler and the black-leg of high and low life might be seen, with careworn brow and eager look, intent upon their close calculations—the bold and reckless gambler ready to stake his all upon the favourite horse—the selfish and the cautious, exercising all his skill in “hedging,” to secure and to enrich himself. I look back with heartfelt satisfaction to the bold and

decided protest which I was enabled, during the space of those ten years, to make against the whole system : and now, at a distance from that city, which I love better than almost any other place, and where some of the happiest years of my life have been spent, I take up my pen to record the same uncompromising protest against what appears to me the crying evil in the sight of God, and the great hindrance to the growth of godliness in the place.

Year after year it seemed as if some advancement was made in winning souls to God, and humanly speaking, this was the case : many an individual began to manifest a desire to walk in the ways of godliness, and to take delight in the things of God ; but perhaps, at the very time that the snare of the fowler seemed broken, and the soul about to escape, the snare was again set, the temptation again presented, and the captive again secured. I believe that this is not only my testimony, but that of several other earnest and anxious ministers of Christ in Chester. How often have I seen some individual, in whom I had begun to take a deep interest, and by whose apparent consistency in attending the means

of grace, I had been led to hope that he was indeed strengthened, stablished and settled, fall away, and prove that he was utterly unable to resist the influence of the periodical mania of the Chester race-week. With his eyes fully opened to the folly and the sin of the way which he was about to take, he has started aside from his new profession, like a broken bow, and realized the strong expression of the Apostle Peter ; by returning "like the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." Many an ingenuous youth well known to me, has deplored with shame-stricken countenance, and fast-falling tears, the gross immoralities of that season. I have before me the instance of two young men especially, in whom the consistent godliness of several years was totally overthrown. I rejoice to think, they have been both, by the grace of God, brought back to the paths which they had forsaken, wiser and humbler from their fall, and have since been enabled to stand in a strength which they had not earnestly sought before. But alas, how many there are, who have not returned, and who have ended by hardening their own conscience, after having begun by resisting its checks.

There was a fine, manly fellow of eight and twenty, apparently a steady sober-minded man, a constant attendant for some time with his godly sister at my church. He was a kind son, an affectionate brother, a good workman, and high in the confidence of his employers. He had joined my Bible class of young men, and had won my esteem by the simple frankness of his disposition, and the plain manliness of his whole bearing. But gradually he withdrew himself from the church and from the Bible class, and all my remonstrances, seconded by those of his widowed mother and sister, were civilly and quietly received, but steadily and inflexibly resisted. And yet there was no apparent immorality to be discovered ; nothing in his life or conduct which either I or his relations could censure, except his utter disregard of the Lord's day, and of all other means of grace. He was still the same affectionate son and brother ; he brought faithfully to his mother at the end of the week, the sum of money—not a small one—which he had agreed to give her for his board and lodging. But his anxious mother sighed in secret, and felt that there was something wrong, though she hardly liked to own

it to herself, while his pious and exemplary sister openly deplored to me the sad change in her beloved Charley. He was seized with an illness, which filled them with alarm. He had worked to the last moment ; and one morning about eleven o'clock, he came in from his work quite exhausted, and throwing himself on a chair, said, with a countenance of deep sadness ; " I must give it up ; I can work no more." He took to his bed. His illness was of a lingering character, and at times he seemed to rally ; but although his apparent recovery filled their hearts with new hope, still he was but the shadow of his former self ; and at last he returned to his bed, never to leave it again. They wished him to see me ; and I went to him immediately. The poor fellow was pleased to see me ; and many an hour did I spend at his bed-side. It was impossible not to be pleased with him ; but though as his friend, I loved him ; as the minister of Christ I could never feel satisfied with his state. He owned to me that he had given up every hope of recovering his health ; he said that he knew that he should die ; but there was something—I could not discover it—which made me feel that there was no

reality about his repentance, nothing genuine in his faith. It was no immorality in the common sense of the word, to which he had yielded ; I questioned him plainly but delicately on all such points. There was however a holding back of something, a coldness, a want of heart in all that he said, when replying to my earnest appeals on the one point of vital importance.

One evening on entering his chamber, I found him in close and earnest conversation with another man, a grave, middle-aged man, who seemed to be as steady and respectable as himself ; his dress shewed that he was well to do in the world, and his manner was more than commonly civil and respectful. He continued to converse with the sick man for a few minutes in a calm quiet voice : but I saw a look exchanged between them, and he rose up and took his leave. I remained with my poor friend about my usual time ; but the visit was as before, unsatisfactory, and yet I could hardly tell why. After I had left him, I was again suddenly summoned to the house : the mother met me with looks of alarm : poor Charley, she said had suddenly been taken much worse ; she feared he was actually

dying at that very time. I hastened up to the chamber, and his sister quitted it as I entered. I think her brother had requested to be left alone with me. He was indeed to all appearance a dying man : never have I witnessed so profuse a death-sweat in any dying person : his hands, his face, his hair, his own linen, and that of the bed, were reeking with the cold and heavy moisture, its chillness when I touched his hand alarmed me. I placed my finger on his pulse, it was scarcely perceptible ; I spoke to him, his manly voice had died almost to a whisper. I said no more, I saw what was needed ; and instantly quitted the room. "I must have strong hot brandy and water immediately for him," I said to his mother. "But he is forbidden," she replied, "to take wine or spirits of any kind. The doctor has ordered nothing but gruel." "He must have brandy, or he will sink at once," I answered, "and I will take the risk upon myself." The cordial was given ; and he gradually revived. I continued sitting by his bed-side. I soon felt his pulse returning to its strength, and not long after, he was enabled to speak to me. "I must tell you, Sir," he said, "what is the cause of all this. It is

not bodily illness ; it is not death ; it is the state of my mind. I must tell you every thing. If I keep my secret any longer, it will kill me. I have made up my mind to speak to you in confidence, as my friend. But you will promise me not to tell my mother and sister : it would break their hearts to know what my course has been, and how shamefully I have deceived them. Ah, Sir, those races ! they have been my ruin ! I had given up for a time—when I came to your church, and to your young men's class—my gambling and my betting ; but I did not know my own weakness ; and by degrees, I fell back again : and the worst of it all is, Sir, the secrecy with which I have been going on in my bad ways. I have had my betting-books at many of the public-houses, not only in Chester, but in Liverpool. The man you saw in my room to-night, is just such another as myself, a respectable, industrious workman, but as entirely given up, as I was, to that wicked gambling. He came to speak to me on the subject to-night : but I had told him, just before you entered the room, never to come to me again, for that I had done with the thing for ever. And now, Sir, let me tell you what have been

the ways of our set. We were all of us sober men, men of good character, industrious, and well-respected, but given up secretly to this betting and gambling. And it was on the Lord's day that we made our plans and settled our books. We used to go quietly one by one from our own houses, taking a round by some of the back-streets of the town, to our place of meeting, at the river-side ; and there take a boat, and go up the Dee for a few miles ; and then when we were out of sight and hearing, we settled our business. You would scarcely believe, if I were to tell you, the large sums that we have lost and won from our calculations, and our bets on the various races throughout the country. We made it a matter of downright business, and carried on the work with the same coolness and steadiness that we gave to our regular calling. Oftentimes I have trembled to think of the risks I have run, and the difficulties in which I have been entangled, and the sums that were at stake, and the ruin that stared me in the face. The wonder has been, how I have been able to bring my mother my weekly pay, and to deceive her and poor Mary as I have all along done ; but

it is the secret deceit of the whole that has cut me to the heart, and as I lay and thought upon it to-night, it took me in such a way, that I think I have gone through all the pains and all the dreadful weakness and faintness of a dying hour. Ill as I am, Sir, it was not my illness that reduced me to the state you saw ; it was this, and only this—the horror that came over me, and the shame, when I thought how I had taken you all in ; and, Sir, I have never been in earnest—you must have seen it—I have never been in earnest—though I am all but a dying man—notwithstanding all the pains you took with me, and all the kindness you shewed me, till now. I have never cared, really cared for my soul, never loved my blessed Saviour. How could I, Sir, keeping back my sin, and hiding my secret in my heart as I have done ? But I am glad that I have told you ; and that I have been open and plain-spoken at last. Ah ! Sir, perhaps you never knew till to-night, what a curse these races have been to many a respectable man like myself, in a secret way. Only let me beg that what I have told to you, you will not let my poor mother and sister know ; for I

cannot bear to think of the grief which they would feel."

I said but little to him that night. There was now no cause to impress upon him the greatness of the sin, of which he was so deeply conscious. But in the little that I did say, I gravely assured him how fully I concurred with the view that he took of his sin, how thoroughly I agreed with him in the abhorrence he felt at the course of continued deceit which he had pursued; and kneeling down beside him, we poured forth together our solemn and humble prayer to Him, who alone had the power and the will to forgive him, in that prevailing name, by which alone the guilty sinner can hope to find pardon and acceptance with an offended and heart-searching God.

When I went to him on the following day, his sister begged to speak to me before I went up to his chamber. Charles had told her and his mother every thing. On quietly thinking the matter over, he had judged it right to do so, and though they had not said a word in excuse of his sin, he had met with nothing but tender affection from those two loving hearts.

I found him much better—the burden

which from the beginning of his illness had oppressed his spirit, had been removed, and he had been enabled, not only to confide it to his earthly friends ; he had laid the whole weight on that gracious Saviour who has borne our own sins in His own body upon the tree : and who is as willing as He is able to receive the returning and repentant sinner. He was enabled to rejoice in that great assurance, that, "if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." He was strengthened in spirit, for he was now rejoicing in hope ; and his bodily health, though he was unable to quit his chamber, or his bed, had apparently improved. The short interval thus graciously granted to him, proved a season of great blessedness. There could be no doubt that the Lord had put away his sin, and had accepted him : and when his strength once more failed him ; and his redeemed spirit departed ; it seemed to all around him, as if the Lord had said unto him ; "Go in peace."

I am well aware that the worldly reader may say, that after all, his sin was not a flagrant one. But those who have been brought to know that the dealings of God are

with the heart, will take the same view as poor Charles — did, of the course of conduct which he had pursued : and will see in the peculiar tenderness of his conscience, and the anguish of mind which he suffered, a proof that he had entered into a true conception of the character of God, and the evil of sin. All however must see from his case how fatal a snare those races had proved to him.

“ Oh, Sir,” said a mother to me, “ I wish I could never hear the name of races. They have brought misery enough into this family.” I was attending the death-bed of her young and pious daughter at the time. “ That dear child,” she said, alluding to her daughter, “ has never recovered the shock of her brother’s conduct. He was led astray by idle and unprincipled men ; and involved himself in their gambling transactions. It happened that his father was expecting a large sum of money by the post. It was not our own ; it was to be paid away. We knew the day when it was to arrive : and when that day arrived, I cannot tell you what came over me—but a suspicion which I could not bear to own to myself, and yet which I was unable to resist, filled me with alarm. I sent off my eldest

daughter without a moment's delay, to the post-office, desiring her to apply for the letter, and bring it immediately to us. But, Sir, my horrible suspicion was but too well-grounded ; her brother had been there before her ; and the letter and the money were gone ! I say, gone ; it had been gambled away before he had obtained it ; and to save him from a public trial, and the disgrace of open exposure, we were obliged to hasten his departure from the country. We sent his youngest sister to remain with him till the ship sailed ; we knew her influence over him ; for if he loved one person on earth, it was her ; and alas, she knew and felt as well as we did that if she had lost sight of him for a moment, he would have let the vessel go without him. He is gone ; he is banished to a distant country ; that favourite sister is now dying ; and we his aged parents can never hope to see him again on earth. Oh, Sir, have I not cause to hate the very name of races ?”

It has often struck me that the whole race-system is one of those evils which hides its enormities under a kind of mask ; and that it would be well to pluck off the mask, and to exhibit its real features. It is spoken of and

often defended, on the ground of its being a manly sport ; and it is presumed that the worst that can be said of it, must be on the score of its being an unprofitable amusement. It must be allowed that many honourable but worldly men, of high rank and great riches, have made themselves foolishly notorious by their enthusiastic attachment to the turf : men who might have been well employed in adorning their high earthly calling, or using their wealth in some noble pursuit, by which they might have benefitted their fellow men, and proved that they were really desirous of fulfilling the duties of their responsible station in society. Surely the man of mind and education ought not to be found wasting the energies of the one, and abusing the advantages of the other by devoting himself to the breeding or the running of a race-horse, and making the pursuit a kind of passion, initiating himself in all those details of the stable and the course which may be well suited to the calling of a groom, but somewhat out of character in the man who bears a name associated with the lofty intellect, or the heroic deeds of those distinguished in the history of his country. One can scarcely repress a smile at hearing of

a nobleman keeping the saddles of his jockeys under his own lock and key. But who can repress a sigh on reading the following quotation from a well-known advocate of the turf, who speaks of gentlemen, "true as the sun in all private transactions, allowing themselves to deviate from the right path on a race-course, *in revenge for what they deemed to have been injustice.* We could name," he adds, "several honourable and highly-minded gentlemen who have openly avowed this.—'Our money has been taken from us : ' they have declared, 'without our having a chance to keep it, and we will recover it in any way we can.'" I remember, some twenty years ago, a lady lamenting to me, that she had herself seen a number of young and lovely women of high rank, whose names she mentioned, going with the gentlemen of their party into a public betting-booth at the M—— races.

There were times, but those times are gone by, when, as we are told, the race-course was the gathering-ground and the meeting-place of the nobility and of the high-bred persons in the county ; and the worst that could be said of it, was, that there the pursuit of worldly pleasure, and the display of worldly pomp and

luxury, and the waste of precious hours, were the chief evils. If gambling in the form of betting was carried on, it was at least only an unpremeditated act, springing from the excitement of the moment. Pride and vanity and folly were doubtless often seen in all their full-blown display, on such occasions : but a low and sordid spirit of covetousness, and a greediness for gain, and a sacrifice of honourable principle would not have been tolerated; Perhaps I am drawing too flattering a picture. But this is at least a charitable view to take of the subject. One fact, however, is certain ; that those times have passed away ; the frequenters of the race-course belong to a very different class at the present day. The open countenance, and the sunny smile, and the high and honourable bearing of the class which then were the chief spectators of the sport, are now the rare exceptions, in the assembled throng. The chief promoters of the amusement—for it still bears the name, and wears the mask of amusement—come together as thoughtful speculating men of business, intent on profit and loss, and too many of them not over-scrupulous as to the means they take of filling their pockets from

the losses and ruin of their associates. Many men are there who have no character to lose, but who are too idle to work industriously and honestly for their daily bread, and who must have money for their selfish gratifications or their profligate pleasures. Let things be called by their right names. If men will gamble and cheat, let them call themselves gamblers, we cannot expect them to own to the other name ; let them defend their pursuits if they can, but not under the name of manly and harmless sports. Would that we could see the abominations of the turf entirely given over to the degraded and demoralized class, who are now their chief promoters. Would that we could see intellectual as well as physical manliness in the pursuits of our English gentlemen ; and that noblest characteristic of an immortal being, Christian manliness, modestly, but openly, manifested. There seems indeed to be the commencement of a better order of things. One can but contrast the scenes of former years at a Newmarket or Epsom meeting, with such meetings as that which I attended last spring, when the young Prince Consort was present, surrounded by some of the

highest noblemen and gentlemen of the country, the good Lord Ashley pre-eminent among them : when the subject that called them together, was the amelioration of the moral and physical condition of the labouring classes : when the noblest sentiments were heard and responded to, and the higher classes proved themselves indeed worthy of the chivalry of their order.

These are not times when the people of the nation most favoured by God, and especially distinguished by His mercies, should be making themselves conspicuous by the follies and the vices of which I have spoken. Amid the shaking of nations, and the heavings of the whole mass of society ; after unexampled commercial distress ; under a second visitation of that scourge of God, the cholera ; amid all the portentous signs of the times, surely if a stern simplicity is not seen,—surely if recreation must be had, where humiliation before God would be most becoming—that recreation should at least be honourable and harmless in its character.

It is not of course my intention to enter upon any lengthened disquisition on the subject of the turf ; but to bring forward some of

those facts that have come under my own observation, in my ministerial office. It falls to the lot of the parish clergyman, in a city like Chester, not only to witness as others do, the rolling in of the flood of dissipation and riot at high-tide ; but to mark the refuse of slime and filth which is left behind, when the tide has receded ; for instance to see the once ingenuous apprentice-lad in the prison-cell for having defrauded his master, that he might have money for his gambling bets, and for his profligate pleasures during the race-week ; to find the once modest servant-girl, the haggard inmate of the penitentiary, and to hear her bewailing with tears, the fatal temptations to which she was exposed from the arts of the unprincipled seducer ; and dating her ruin from the Chester race-week. I speak advisedly when I affirm this, and speak with authority, when I assert this to be a common case.

I was myself assured by a respectable Chester tradesman, and not by him alone, that scarcely a year passed by, without some cases occurring of boys and young men purloining their master's goods or money in order to enter into the dissipations of the Chester race-week. But I needed not such testimonies, for too

many such cases have come under my own observation. "I have heard many people say," said the above-mentioned tradesman—I copy his own written words, before me at this moment—"that they can go to the races without joining in the evils committed there. I shall just state, as far as regards myself, that I have gone to the races years ago,"—when he was a mere boy—"with my mind made up not to join in any of the gambling which is to be met with there. But what was the result? Why, that the temptation was too strong to be resisted, and that I went home penniless."

Frightful warnings have been given occasionally at such seasons, during my own residence in Chester. Warnings which struck the minds of many with horror, but which were soon forgotten, as fresh excitement called off the attention of the light-minded and heedless. Let me glance at one, the details of which I shall not enter into. A woman, the keeper of a house of infamy, was fitting up and adorning her rooms for that week of abounding profligacy; when she was suddenly struck with death: she was carried to her bed and a message was sent to the clergyman

of the parish, to beg that he would come, and give her *the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* ! She died, and her funeral took place, I myself saw the mourners stand around the open grave. This occurred on the last day of the week previous to the races. But her husband completed the preparations which she had begun, and the house was opened for its accustomed iniquities during that notorious week !

There was a man in the last stage of a consumption. He sent for a kind and pious neighbour well known to me, and from her own lips I heard the account. She hoped that her presence was required as a Christian friend ; but she was deeply shocked to find that after listening to her for a short time, on the one subject which pressed heavily on her own heart, and which was alone of importance to him ; he suddenly declared that if he died on the way, he would be taken to the race-course. No entreaties that she and others could use, would avail to make him change his purpose. He was carried thither, and brought back more dead than alive. She was in the house when they brought him back ; he insisted on being placed in a chair, and on

a pen being given him, to set down some gambling calculation. He was in the act of doing so, when the pen dropped from his fingers, and he fell back dead !

Another touching instance I must record. A man came to Chester races, the owner of a puppet-show of Punch ; and failed I suppose in obtaining his usual harvest. A young woman of interesting appearance accompanied him, supposed to be his wife. When the races were over, he went away and left her in their wretched lodging, without food, and utterly penniless. She loved the heartless fellow, and gently said to those who blamed him, that he had gone at her desire, that he might earn some money for them both, on some other race-ground. The kind-hearted people of the house pitied her extreme distress ; they gave her food, and sent for me to visit her, but not till it was too late ; for though I went immediately, I found she was already dead ; the parting with the man, they assured me, had actually broken the heart of this poor devoted creature ! The occupation of this man, the voice of Punch, and the antics of the puppet show—Oh, with what a frightful mockery did they contrast with the deep and

real tragedy of the broken heart, and the silent corpse of that youthful and deserted woman.

Fact after fact rises to my remembrance. I have not space for many in these pages—others, and those of a character the most deeply disgusting, are of such a description, that for the sake of common decency I could not mention them. One or two more however I must add.

The wife of a sick man sent me a message by one of her friends, to beg that I would come and visit him. I of course obeyed the summons. I found her in the sitting-room of her house, and she shewed much pleasure on seeing me, and spoke with great anxiety about her husband's state. "He was asleep when I left him, Sir," she said; "but perhaps you will come up at once?" I asked if it would not be better for her to go up first to him, to see if he were awake, and to mention that I was waiting. "No, Sir," she replied mildly, "if you will oblige me, you will let me take you to his room, without first telling him that you are here. He can never recover; and I hope you will speak to him and pray with him; but I fear that if I were to ask you to wait till I had spoken to him, he would

make some excuse, and decline seeing you. And Sir, if you please, you must see him." I followed her immediately to the room. The poor young man was sitting near the fire-place, and was already awake. He was fearfully emaciated, and looked very ill. He received me with some restraint, but was gentle and respectful in his manner. I afterwards learnt from himself that he knew nothing of my coming, but that his affectionate wife, in her anxiety for his spiritual welfare, had determined if possible to bring me to visit him, though she knew, that had his consent been asked, he would not have given it. Observing his constraint of manner, I felt that I should have to win my way to his confidence, I said therefore but little to him on that first visit. I wished him to feel that I was kind, and I did not wish to alarm him by speaking of his danger, which was but too apparent ; but kneeling down beside him, I offered up a prayer, in which I dwelt chiefly on the tender mercy of God, in revealing Himself as a reconciled Father in Christ to guilty and wretched sinners ; and on the gracious invitations of our blessed and forgiving Redeemer. He seemed softened and soothed, when I rose up, and expressed his

thankfulness in a pleasing manner, for my kindness in feeling for him and coming to visit him. I asked him,—as I often do on such occasions,—whether he would wish me to come again. He smiled and said that he should think it very kind in me, if I would come, and that he hoped I would. I went again, and soon became almost a daily visitor in his sick chamber. He now began to speak to me of his own sinful and ungodly course ; of time wasted, money squandered, health and constitution ruined : and the thought that he was a dying man, and that his opportunities of retrieving the past, were gone by for ever, seemed to make him very wretched. It was not till after I had been acquainted with him for some weeks, that I knew any thing of the history of his past life. But he had begun to feel a sincere affection for me, and to open his whole heart to me with an unreserved confidence.

I was sitting by his side, I well remember, as on my first interview, by the fire-place, in his light and airy chamber, when he began by saying ; “ Dear Sir, not long ago, I hated your very name, I was told that you were harsh and severe, and took a pleasure in set-

ting yourself against the races and all the pleasant amusements of the place. In short, Sir, the character they gave you, led me to feel a strong dislike to you. I was taken by surprise when you first came to see me, and when you spoke so kindly, and with such tenderness to me ; and when I saw by your looks that you felt for my sufferings ; and heard you pray so earnestly that God would forgive me and bless me, I could not help feeling grateful to you for visiting me, and caring for me ; and I soon discovered how prejudiced and how mistaken I had been about you : and now I know you to be my friend, and I have found out what the friendship of my former companions was worth. They have helped to bring me to the state in which you see me, and now they all forsake me. You are right, Sir, in objecting to the races. And indeed, you could not speak too strongly against them. Those friends who forget me and forsake me now, first tempted me to neglect my business, and injure my health, by the life I led with them, drinking and gambling, and indeed, in a manner given up to the pleasures and sins connected with the race-course." Again he dwelt upon their

neglect of him in his sick-chamber, when he could no longer be a pleasant companion, and squander his money away with them. "I have sent them messages," he said, "and I have written to one or two of them: but I get no answer, and not one of them will come near me. And yet I don't think that they mean it unkindly: but I know that they cannot bear to think of death, and would shun the chamber of a dying man." I can bear my testimony, for I was with him to the last, that not one of his former associates ever came to see him: but he passed away from this world as much, to all appearance, forgotten by them all, as if they had never known him.

As he became acquainted with the gracious invitations of the gospel, which God gave him faith to embrace with his whole heart, his hatred of his former life increased, and he began to be happy in the hope which he felt, that God had forgiven his sins, and that he might look forward to the blessedness of everlasting life in the kingdom of heaven. And now he learnt to feel a deep and real concern for those friends who had so unkindly forsaken him. "Will you promise me," he said to me, but a short time before

his death, "will you promise me, Sir, to preach a sermon expressly to them, to tell them from your pulpit, when I am gone, how unhappy I was made by the life I led with them; and to bid them take warning by my early death? Will you ask them to pray to God to turn their hearts to Him, as He has turned mine?" "I would willingly do so," I replied, "but if I were to preach the sermon as you request me, they would never hear it. At present they never enter my church; and therefore they would not know, unless I sent to tell them, that I intended to preach such a sermon. And if I were to invite them to come, you must be well aware from what you have told me of their views and habits, that would be the very means to drive them away." "But I should wish them to be warned," he said; "and if they will not come to me, and hear from my own lips my testimony as a dying man, in what way can I reach them?" I advised his writing to each of them a private letter, and promised to write the letters at his bed-side, under his dictation: and this was to have been done; but it pleased God to order it otherwise. His faintness was so extreme, when I next saw him, that he was

scarcely able to speak : and in that state he continued, till he fell asleep in Jesus.

Perhaps these pages may meet the eyes of some of those former companions of his. I hope they may ; and if such should be the case, they will know—without the name being given—of whom I have been speaking. And with all friendliness and gentleness of spirit, I would say to them, that I wish they could have seen their once gay and light-hearted companion, as I saw him. I wish they could have heard him speak of the utter emptiness and unprofitableness of all that he had once deemed pleasure. I wish they could have witnessed the thorough disgust with which he turned away from the thought of the betting-book, and the racing-stable, and the course, and the drinking, and all the other evil and ungodly ways closely associated with their favourite pursuit. I wish they could have seen his touching grief of heart, and heard his lamentations over his mis-spent life, and the ruin he had brought upon his delicate and sickly wife—so tenderly attached to him, and so uncomplaining—and over his three little girls. And I wish they could also have seen with what deep thankfulness he had received

the gospel of the grace of God, and the gracious invitation of the Saviour whom, in health and strength, he had neglected and despised, in calling the weary and heavy-laden to come unto Him and find rest unto their souls. He had obeyed the call, and had departed in peace.

After his death his affairs were found completely involved, and his little property entirely gone. His poor wife, who had borne up with extraordinary strength and even cheerfulness, to the moment of his departure, never held up her head again, took to her bed soon after, and died not only worn out in health, but broken-hearted. His three little delicate girls were quite orphaned.

After seeing what I saw, and hearing what I heard, during the illness of that misguided young man, who could hesitate to regard him as a victim, a willing one I own, but decidedly a victim, to the infatuation of the race course? I call the feeling prevalent among all classes in Chester, an infatuation, for it is nothing less. The race-week is to very many the one event of the year to which they look forward, the season from which they seem to date. You do not hear them saying, It will be a

year last Christmas day, or last Easter, but "last race-week ;" and as I said before, this is the great hindrance, humanly speaking, to the spread and the rooting of religion in Chester.

I can bear witness to the state of the alleys in my own parish during that season, especially the orgies of drunkenness ; when some continued in one fit of intoxication during the whole week. I am a close observer, as my reader may discover ; and I do not hesitate to say, from what I have seen with my own eyes and heard with my own ears, but what I cannot, for very shame's sake, write down and print, that no description of heathen debauchery which I have ever met with could be worse than the state of Chester in a race-week.

I shall never forget the impression made on my mind by a song which I heard from the lips of two little jockey-boys, whom I passed on the evening of one Sunday preceding the race-week. I looked at the child-like expression of their faces, and their slight and delicate figures, and their neat and well-made dress, and I could only hope that they did not know the meaning of their own words, for they were, without exception, the most revoltingly

indecent words I ever heard from human lips. I was on the way to my evening lecture, where I had to preach to a crowded congregation, and to preach on the evils of the week which had commenced with that Sabbath, and I could not refrain mentioning, from the pulpit, the impression made upon me by the song of those poor children.

The minister of the gospel, who is faithful and bold enough to speak out on the subject, were he to be as gentle as an angel, would be sure to stir up a storm of anger in the hearts of many of the people. They would bear almost any thing but a word against the races. I have never met with kinder friends than in the city of Chester, and I love the place and the people from my heart ; but I have had to encounter as many of those storms as most of my brethren, particularly in my determined and successful efforts, to put down the illegal doings of the cock-pit. That inhuman sport, more suited to fiends than to the immortal creature whom the Lord God constituted and appointed to be the guardian of all the lower animals of the creation, used to be carried on every morning of the race-week in the Chester cock-pit ; and thither the admirers of the

vile, unmanly amusement, came in troops to witness the furious fights and the dying agonies of the noble birds, trained and fed with the most stimulating food to make them as fierce as possible when opposed to one another. The races commenced at two o'clock in the afternoon, but all the morning the cock-pit was open, and the yells and shouts of the unmanly throng who filled the spacious building, were so loud, that more than once I have started from my seat and thrown open one of the windows of my study, thinking that some brutal outrage was being committed by a furious mob, in the street beyond the garden-court of the house I then occupied. It was only the riotous yellings from the adjacent cock-pit. I felt this evil to be a disgrace to the common humanity of my fellow townsmen. I am happy to say that not many of *them* were the frequenters of the cock-pit.*

* The feeding and training of fighting cocks was a science much prized by the lovers of the degrading amusement. In a parish where I once resided, there was a fine old man of eighty years of age. He was highly respectable, and had been a tried and trustworthy upper servant in some families of note. He was celebrated, however, for his extraordinary skill in the art of feeding fighting cocks : and his aged and pious wife, entertaining a deep abhorrence of the practice, obtained from him in her dying

I sent for the Act of Parliament, the 5th and 6th of William the 4th, in which the fighting of cocks, and the baiting of bulls, dogs, &c., are declared to be contrary to the law of the land, and I resolved, in the face of whatever opposition I might meet with, to put an end to the inhuman and illegal exhibition. I, of course, had as I foresaw, much anger and violent opposition to encounter, but the cause was well worthy of much more, and the disgrace exists no longer. The cock-pit has been turned into a railway-warehouse. To give some idea of the violent resentment which I stirred up against me, I will mention but one instance. I could mention many. One morning, in the depth of winter, when the ground

hour, when I was present, a solemn promise that no sum of money which might be offered to him, no entreaty or inducement whatsoever, should ever prevail with him again to train and feed fighting-cocks. For some time after her death, he resolutely withstood the applications that were made to him, which his character as the most famous trainer in that part of England, obtained for him even at that advanced age. But one day, the old man was missing; and his children afterwards told me in much distress of mind, that the temptation to their father, backed by his own rooted inclination, had overcome the promise made to their dying mother—that he had actually run away, unknown to them, and was then employed in training the cocks of a certain gentleman, whose name at least was one of the highest respectability in a neighbouring county.

was covered with snow, which was falling fast, I was on my way to meet a class of young men, who assembled at six o'clock all the year round, on the Wednesday morning of every week. The darkness was so thick that I had taken a lantern with me, though the gas-lights in the rows, or covered passages peculiar to Chester, afforded me some light, when I entered them. While walking down Bridge Street Row, my notice was drawn to a dark figure lying on its face, in one of the galleries of the row. I stopped, and bending down, saw that the figure was that of a man. His head was towards the open street, touching the rails of the gallery, and the snow-flakes were falling thickly upon it. I spoke to him, and tried to move him, but he did not answer me, and gave no signs of life. I feared that some poor houseless creature had fallen dead, or received a death-blow there; and kneeling down beside him, I at last succeeded in turning him round and partly raising him. I held my lantern close to his face, to see if I could recognise him, but the face was that of a stranger. The strong glare of the intense and concentrated light upon his eyes awoke him, for he was not dead; he was dead-drunk. He

opened his eyes, and at the same instant a deep curse issued from his lips. He could not see me, for I knelt in the darkness, and all the light being turned upon his own face, deepened the shadows around me, but a name was coupled with the awful name of that most holy Being which he profaned by that frightful curse, and that name was my own. He was cursing me in the name of God—doubtless in those first stirrings of returning consciousness, pursuing the theme which had furnished the conversation of the set he had just quitted. I scarcely knew what to do with the wretched drunkard at that early hour, and at a distance from my own house ; but on looking out into the street, I saw that the ostlers were leading forth the horses from the stables of the Feather's Inn, to be in readiness for the arrival of the Welch mail-coach. With the assistance of one of the ostlers, I raised the drunken man, and had him taken to the warm stables, the ostler kindly promising to keep him there, and take care of him till the day broke, and his intoxication had passed off.

He came, I learnt, from a village about two miles from Chester, and had been drinking deep at some public-house all the night. Had

laid down in the house, for the single week.

I was always reminded by the clamour, which any decided opposition to the races and their abundant abominations met with from some parties, of the uproar which was raised in heathen Ephesus, when "there arose no small stir about that way," and a plausible tradesman of the city, named Demetrius, dreading lest the preaching of the gospel of our blessed Redeemer should deprive him of his gains, addressed his fellow-tradesmen with these words—"Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth." The injury to his trade and to his gains, was to him an insuperable objection to the spread of the gospel, in his native city. This was what might be expected among heathens and idolators, but we do wonder at the perversion of professed Christians, in allowing such a consideration to weigh with them, or in supposing that a blessing can rest upon ungodly gain from Him, who has solemnly assured us, that covetousness is idolatry, and the covetous man an idolator.

It was not from any spirit of this kind: but from mingled good nature and timidity, that a highly respectable and pious man, for

whom I felt a sincere esteem, continued to give a yearly subscription to the tradesman's race-cup. Initials only, and the name of the row in which he dwelt, with the subscription given, being published in the list of those who openly subscribed to the cup. This led me to suspect who it was. Taking the newspaper in my hand, I went to him, and pointing to the initials, asked him plainly if they were his. He replied with perfect frankness, that he was ashamed to say they were. "And yet you disapprove of all such proceedings," I said. "I do indeed," he replied, "I have never been at a race in my life, nor would any thing induce me to attend one." "But the races are good for the trade of the city," I continued: "and therefore you deem it expedient to support them?" "No, indeed, Sir," he replied, "I was actuated by no such motive. The simple truth is this: that my predecessor in this business was in the habit of giving that sum annually, and without thinking much about the matter, I continued the custom. At these last races, however, I declined giving any thing: but the friendly neighbours who waited upon me, and with whom I am upon

the best terms, urged me so strongly, that I literally had not the courage to refuse them ; and having unfortunately expressed a strong objection to appearing as an advocate of practices of which I disapproved,"—"That may be easily managed," they said ; "we need not publish your name, only give us your subscription. I am ashamed to say, I consented. This is the fact." "Surely, my friend," I replied, "the more manly way would have been to give your name, or to withhold your subscription ; for by doing as you have done, you were bringing a slander upon your Christian profession." "You are right, Sir," he replied, "and I thank you for the lesson you have given me. The thing is settled from this moment. I will not again subscribe to the Chester races." He kept his word.

And now, in concluding this chapter, I would say to some of my readers, in the city of Chester—for I know that I shall have many there—that I lay the foregoing facts before them, a few out of the many which I could bring forward ; and with all respect and affection, I ask them to give a quiet consideration to my statements. It is not possible that they can have known as much as I have known

of these evils,—for such they are. My calling and my position when among them, brought me necessarily in contact with them. And if they are facts,—and I pledge my word to the truth of them,—then I would ask any man, whose Christian profession is not a mere mockery of what is good and sacred, whether such facts are not arguments that cannot be refuted? I am well aware that the race-mania has increased of late years; and that all the evils which I speak of, have reached a fearful height: things were much worse when I left Chester, than they had ever been before; and there appeared to be a more determined spirit to defy and put down all opposition offered by the religious portion of the community. But I would remind them that this is usually the case, when evils are at their height. It is then as with the stream of the old Chester river, that the tide is about to turn.

It was well said in a sermon preached from my pulpit during the race-week, by a true benefactor of the people of Chester: “If money which God gave for the relief of the poor and the extension of His gospel through the world, has been applied for the purpose of covetousness, sensuality and lust:

if all the worst passions of the corrupted heart of man, have been brought into a livelier exercise by the excitement of the scene, and the emulations of the race-course ; if cheating, lying, swearing, cursing, hatred, envy, and malice, have been the employments of the week ; and the abundance of God's gifts has been made the occasion of more than ordinary ungodliness ; if this has been the case—and who will venture to deny it?—is there not reason why the overflowings of ungodliness should make us afraid ? And might we not fear, while we look on the state of things around us, and compare the practice of the day with the privileges possessed, that the language which we might be doomed to hear, should be only this ; “ Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord ; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this ? ”

‘ In these moments then,’ he continues, ‘ when the overflowings of ungodliness make us afraid, I look to the withdrawal of blessings, rather than to the infliction of punishment ; to the loss of privilege, rather than to actual sufferings ; but under that impression, I think it impossible to look to such scenes as

these, thus patronized and thus supported, without feeling that we are forfeiting glories, which we had hoped were to be ours ; that we are throwing away that character of a wise and understanding people, which we were prepared to claim ; and that we cannot be the people of whom the Lord says ; "This is the people that I have formed for myself ; they shall shew forth my praise." '*

* See a Sermon preached in St. Peter's Church, Chester, May 6, 1846, by the Rev. H. Raikes, Chancellor of Chester ; on the Overflows of Ungodliness.

CHAPTER XVI.

HUMILITY.

IF there is one of the lovely graces of the Christian character, for which the minister of Jesus Christ has need more particularly to pray, both for himself, and for others, it is humility. But, alas, when we search our own hearts, we are constrained to confess, with shame and sorrow, that in nothing are we so miserably wanting, as in humility; and when we go forth among our fellow-men, then both in the ministers, and in the other members of the Church, we find no grace so rare as humility. It is but as a lowly plant among the shrubs and flowers of the garden, where its leaves are freshest, and its growth most vigorous, but we too commonly find it dwarfed and sickly—it is the neglected plant of the

garden : and yet what so becomes a fallen creature, who in himself is nothing—from himself has nothing—as that deep and thorough conviction of his own nothingness, which partly constitutes humility. That grace, however, which is declared to be peculiarly the mind that was in Christ Jesus, is the very grace which most of his professed disciples discard, or take no account of. It is a question of no less interest than importance, why does the inspired Apostle dwell upon this feature in the character of our blessed Lord, and describe it as the mind that was in Christ Jesus? Was it because its being found at all in Him, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, and was, and is God, is altogether most astonishing ; for He was the only son of man who had whereof to glory in Himself. But it is one of the marvels of His humanity, that in Him alone this grace was seen in its perfection. It is no matter of surprise, that Christ was truth, love, purity, goodness, these are the very attributes of God, but humility is no attribute of Christ, as God. He has made it, however, the attribute of God as man—and in coming down from heaven to earth, and taking the form and fashion of a man,

He was graciously pleased to shew, in his own deep humility, that every fallen creature, who had been rescued and restored by His death, and renewed by His Spirit, and conformed to His image, must excel in this grace. Thus it was that the inspired Apostle, after saying to the Church at Philippi, "Let nothing be done through strife and vain glory; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves;" adds this exhortation to the imitating of the character of Jesus: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus;" but I repeat, wherever we go, we find no grace so rare. There is no lack of zeal, of earnestness, of faith, of love, and many other graces, but we look too often in vain for humility. And yet in those, who have put on humbleness of mind, how graceful is the garment they wear, how peculiarly becoming to a once lost, fallen, wretched sinner, who is saved by grace alone, and stands by grace alone, who has nothing whereof to glory in himself, but can glory in Christ alone! But as it is usually with the highest in intellect, so is it with the holiest in spirit; they are the humblest in their own eyes. The truly holy man is the man who has received the most

grace, and God does not give grace to the proud. "He resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." The holy man is therefore humble and meek, like his Divine master ; he has learnt to deal tenderly with his fallen brethren, to be kind, gentle, patient, with the failings and infirmities of others, for he cannot forget who has made him to differ ; and he is ready to make allowances, and to suspend his judgment ; and instead of pushing and jostling to take the highest place, he stands out of the way, to let others take the chief place ; he is willing to be passed by unnoticed, and to be nothing ; and we shall find him quietly seated in the lowest room, quite contented to remain there, till it shall please his beloved Lord, to come to him and say, "Friend, go up higher."

I love to dwell upon the words of a distinguished Lady of high rank, the sister of the Honorable Robert Boyle ; they were found in her diary—"O Lord, I am not humble ; O give me grace that I may be humble, and when thou hast me made humble, then give me more grace, for thou givest grace to the humble."

One who had observed, with a fine discrimi-

nation, the character of her friend, the highly-gifted and eminently spiritual Duchess de Broglie, thus explains the secret of that profound humility, for which she was distinguished :—" Although she excelled others in so many ways, she was truly humble ; for her thoughts were fixed, not on what she possessed in the eyes of men, but on what she wanted in the sight of God."

The very opposite might be said of many among us ; for the false estimate which men take of themselves, is usually at the root of their pride. Their minds are occupied by what they excel in before men, rather than by what they are wanting in before God.

Many years have passed away since I was requested to visit a lady of rank, who was an earnest enquirer after the truth. She was very ill, but as it appeared, not in immediate danger. Her disorder wore a mysterious character. There was much difference of opinion about it in the minds of the medical men who attended her ; and some of them spoke with confidence of her ultimate recovery. One of her friends, who was deeply interested in her spiritual welfare, was the person that had invited me to visit her, and she accompanied me

in my first interview with her. Lady ——— was even then one of the loveliest persons I have ever seen. It was not the mere beauty of form or feature,—and yet she was exceedingly beautiful—but a feminine grace and refinement, a simple elegance which is rarely seen even in the most high-bred of our nobility.

She said little on that day ; her only son was with her ; and no opportunity was given me of introducing the subject of my visit. But a few days after I again called on her, and I found her alone. Her every look shewed that she was suffering keenly and deeply from the conviction of her guilt in the sight of God. She had been brought to see the corruption of her own heart, and the vanity and sinfulness of her past ungodly life ; but, of that peace which calms the disturbed and trembling spirit, and of which the Apostle speaks, when he says—“ Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ”—it can spring from no other source—of that peace, she knew nothing.

She said that she had been told by a well-known and excellent clergyman, whom she

named, and who had visited her, that she must see her sins forgiven, and know herself to be a child of God : " but this I cannot do," she added. " I believe that Christ is all-sufficient to forgive even my sins, but I cannot say that I see them forgiven ; indeed I know my heart too well to suppose that, in my present sinful and unhumbled state, I am a pardoned child of God." I saw that she had mistaken the clergyman of whom she spoke, and perhaps he had somewhat mistaken her. After some conversation, in which I entreated her not to add to her other sins, a distrust in the willingness, as well as the power of the Son of Man to forgive all her sins ; but to pray that He would give her more grace, and increase her faith, I pointed out to her and read with her, some of those portions of Holy Scripture which appeared to me most suited to her case, and prayed that God would graciously bring her, by the teaching of His word, and of the Holy Spirit, to sound and clear views of the only way of salvation to His fallen creatures,

I thought of a book which seemed to me admirably suited to meet her case—a volume by that Master in Divinity, Dr. Owen, his Commentary on the 130th Psalm, of which

Mr. Bickersteth has given this opinion—"It is one of the fullest displays of evangelical forgiveness we have ever met with." Some of my readers may remember a beautiful passage in that precious Commentary. "A sin-entangled soul is oft-times reduced to this condition, in looking out for relief; it can discover nothing but this, that God is able, and can, if He graciously please, relieve and acquit him. All other support, or springs of relief, are shut up, or hid from him. The springs indeed may be nigh, as that was to Hagar; but their eyes are withheld, that they cannot see them. Wherefore, they cast themselves on God's sovereign pleasure, and say with Job, 'Though He slay us, we will put our trust in Him.' We will not let Him go. In ourselves we are lost, that is unquestionable; how the Lord will deal with us, we know not: we see not our signs and tokens any more; evidences of God's grace in us, or of His love and favour to us, are all out of sight. To a present special interest in Christ, we are strangers; and we lie every moment at the door of eternity. What course shall we take? What way shall we proceed? If we abide at a distance from God, we shall assuredly perish. Who ever har-

dened himself against Him and prospered? Nor is there the least relief to be had, but from and by Him; for who can forgive sins but God? We will then bring our guilty souls into His presence, and attend the pleasure of His grace: and what He speaks concerning us, we will willingly submit to. And this sometimes proves an anchor to a tossed soul; which, though it gives it not rest and peace, yet it saves it from the rock of despair. Here it abides, until light more and more break forth upon it."

It appeared to me that passages like this, from that deeply experimental book, were exactly suited to the earnest and troubled spirit of this anxious enquirer. Lady —— was a woman of superior mind, and, while careless readers, unawakened to their danger, might have taken no interest in deeply searching and experimental discussions on the point of assurance, she was tremblingly alive to this subject, and full of anxiety about it. But I may tell my reader that I gave the book, admirable as it is, only as a humble human handmaid to the word of the living God. We ought always to impress upon our people, that they must beware of the influence of any

book, but the one Inspired Volume. We ought to urge them to guard the Holy Scriptures with a watchful jealousy, and to turn from all other books again and again to that pure spring of Divine truth. Who is there that can say he reads or rather searches the scriptures as frequently, or as sufficiently, as he might easily search them? Who is there that can say he knows enough, or can ever know enough, of their Divine wisdom? Ah! if we really felt their value, and our own high privilege, we should regard less as a duty than a delight, the command of our blessed Lord, to search the Scriptures. There is no influence of life or power in any book but the word of God—but alas, even the written word will be to the inquirer but as a dead letter till the eyes of his understanding be enlightened and opened by the Holy Spirit.

Peace and assurance were not soon attained by this sincere follower of our Lord. She read the treatise of Owen, and she continued to search the inspired word, but she was called upon to wait the Lord's time, and more than four years were to pass away before the peace she yearned to find from the assurance of hope, was granted to her. It was not all at once

that a spirit long entangled in the ways of a world at enmity with God, was to be brought into the liberty of his dear children—and those four years were to be a season of severe bodily suffering, as well as spiritual distress. She had also been misled by erroneous instruction on some points of vital importance. This I discovered from her conversation, and from some of the books which had been given to her, and this added to the difficulty of her disentanglement.

Her views were clear on one subject alone, her own great sinfulness before God, her entire unworthiness in His sight. It seemed indeed, as if the Holy Spirit, having brought a vital conviction into her heart on this point, had, in His mysterious wisdom, left that conviction to sink and to settle there, before He again visited her. But not a murmur passed her lips. Under all her severe bodily and mental sufferings, so far from deeming herself hardly dealt with, she seemed penetrated to the soul by a sense of God's great goodness to her. The dispensation with which she was visited, was peculiarly a humbling one, and she felt and owned she needed it. Her natural disposition, was however cheerful, and

even buoyant, and it was truly astonishing to see, how, after some season of torturing pain, she would rally from the exhaustion it produced, and speak with cheerfulness of the cause she had to be thankful for such sweet intervals of comparative ease.

After having visited her constantly for some months, I was unexpectedly called to quit the curacy I then held, and subsequently to settle for several years in a distant part of England. I heard from her occasionally during the few last years of her life which succeeded, and I was enabled to see her two or three times. Her letters were written in pencil, by a few lines at a time, when she felt equal to that slight exertion. She was so very weak, that, at her request, I had procured a Bible for her in sheets, that she might have but a few light pages to hold in her hand, as she lay ; for she was unable to bear the weight of a book. Her illness increased after my departure, and as the only nourishment she was permitted to take, was scarcely sufficient to keep her from starving, she was reduced almost to a shadow of her former self. A long time had elapsed since she had written to me, and from the accounts which I received, the time of her

death seemed close at hand. I was however, astonished, on opening my letters, one morning, to find a letter from Lady ——. It was written, as usual, in pencil—but it commenced by her telling me, that she was surprisingly better. “My doctors,” she writes, “changed the medicines, and gave me indeed scarcely any medicine, except some strong acid, and a great deal of lemon-juice. The experiment has succeeded so well, that it has been continued ever since, with great success. I am often quite free from pain, much stronger, and have even got out into the open air. I do not attempt to describe to you my feelings on this apparent restoration to life, for I had so long kept my thoughts fixed on death, and all relating to it, that it sometimes seems like a dream to me that I am alive, and in the air, seeing again the sky and the trees. I had been in a state of suffering for three years, and during the last twenty months, seldom out of my bed, unless when carried like a child, to be laid on that in the next room. I do not, however, think myself sure of recovery, because I am better; but surely it would be ungrateful not to hope for it, when there is such a relief from pain. But it may

be the will of God to try me further, by calling me to resign my life ; or to more severe suffering after a temporary abatement of my complaint. Whatever may be *His* will, I pray that I may be resigned to it with the same strong sense I now have of His infinite goodness and mercy, and that I may believe that *all* is done, which is best and kindest for me. You will understand me when I say how fearful I am, lest I should forget how much I have to be grateful for. *May God keep me humble, keep me penitent, and make me grateful !* I repeat this prayer continually. You have prayed for me in my suffering, offer this prayer for me now, my dear friend, and if it should please God to restore me to some degree of health, do not forget me *then* in your prayers.

“ There was a beautiful storm here, two evenings ago. How I admired it ! how forcibly it called to my recollection times, when I have thought ; ‘ this is probably the last storm I shall see in this state of existence. When I see lightnings again, where will they be ? and what shall I be ? ’ Such reflections, however, at the time, were not depressing to me. I have suffered much, and for a long time. I

have known that my case was considered hopeless by many, and lately doubtful by the most sanguine of my physicians. I have been sometimes very near death, and during the whole of my illness I have been quite alone. My thoughts have been constantly on death, but my spirits have been good, and I am now, contrary to all hope, appearing likely to recover a certain degree of health. For the comfort I have found in religion, I am, by the blessing of God, much indebted to you. May God bless you for it, and prosper your endeavours to be equally useful to others. How I wish you were here now to help me to improve *this* time! I do not know when I last wrote to you, but one day is to me, so like another, that I scarcely know how the time passes. I am obliged to continue very quiet and to see nobody; but I am so accustomed to living alone, that I do not wish to see any one. I am afraid it is not probable you will be in this neighbourhood again, at present; but if you are, pray contrive to come to see me. How I do wish (now I hope that I may live) that you had remained at ——. Pray let me hear from you.

Yours ——.

July 13th.

Soon after I received this letter, I saw Lady —, she had been sitting in a garden-chair, under the old elms at —, and enjoying the soft air as it came freshened from the broad stream of the Thames, and waved the luxuriant foliage of those fine old trees. She was returning to her quiet room, when I met her, and was fatigued by the exertion, but received me with her usual beautiful smile, and said, 'that she had continued wonderfully better. But I have been a great sufferer since I saw you,' she added,—'during a whole year my tongue has been so painfully swollen; (probably from the medicine she had taken) that I have not been able to keep my mouth shut.' She was certainly better; but I was shocked to observe the change which her illness had produced in her. She seemed to have become almost an old person since I had last seen her. Her complexion, which had been fair and clear as stainless ivory, had become sallow; her large hazel eyes were sunk under her brow; her dark chesnut hair had turned grey, and her pearly teeth, yellow. But her voice, which was always peculiarly sweet, had retained all its soft musical tones, and her manner still possessed that simple

and indescribable charm, which had before distinguished it. We conversed chiefly, nay, almost exclusively, on one subject ; and she did not conceal the delight she felt in the revived hope of prolonged life, trusting as she said, that God would graciously enable her to prove the sincerity of her profession, by living entirely to Him. But all she said, was in accordance with her prayer, ‘Lord, keep me humble, keep me penitent, and make me thankful.’ She was unable to bear a long visit from me ; I saw this, and after praying with her, and solemnly commending her to God, I took my leave.

Her apparent recovery was not of long continuance ; it was followed by a relapse to far greater suffering than she had before endured ; and her weakness was so extreme, that her exhausted frame was now less able to bear up against the force of the disease. She wrote to me again—‘I am ashamed to think how long it is since I received your kind letter ; but if you knew how ill and weak I feel, you would not wonder that I did not write. Inflammation came on again, and I have never been so well since. I felt the disappointment very much—much more than I

ought to have done. It unsettled me so much for a time, that at my request, my kind friend Mrs. S——, wrote for me to your bookseller, to enquire if you were still in, or any where near London; intending, if you were, to request you to come to see me: but you were gone to H——t. I thank God, my mind is easy and resigned now.' This relapse was doubtless needed, and sent in love by Him who saw that heavy chastening was the furnace-fire by which He would refine her as silver is refined, and try her as gold is tried. As she had frequently told me, she felt that such severe chastening was quite necessary. She deplored, with much heaviness of heart, the temptation by which she was often tried, to neglect reading the word of God. 'When I do read,' she said, 'it seems to me as if I were performing a task, and I sometimes secretly wish that I could turn to some other book; but this I would not do.' She complained also, that she could not keep her attention fixed to the whole of a chapter; and that, after having read it, she felt as if all that she had been reading, was gone from her.

I strongly urged upon her to read only one or two verses of holy Scripture at a time; and

to pray for grace to delight in them, and to profit by them ; and to keep those few verses before her mind, revolving them over and over, dwelling and meditating upon them, and continuing to pray till those precious words were brought home to her heart, in their Divine power and comfort. She did so, and found, as all who do this, have found, how entirely the plan succeeded.

I saw her once again : she appeared to be brought almost as low as it was possible for any human creature to be brought, and yet to be alive. I went at an early hour in the day, and her first question was, how long I could remain with her ? I told her, almost the whole of the day. She smiled, and said, since such was the case, she would ask me to come and read and pray with her for a very short time, and then to leave her, and return again when she had gained strength to listen again to the word of God. ‘ Forgive my asking this ; but you will find,’ she said, ‘ that I am obliged to request this favor of you. The only nourishment which I am now able to bear, is a very small quantity of ass’s milk, and this is always followed by sickness. Will you kindly promise me the

moment the attack comes on, not to come near me, but to ring for my maid, and till she appears, not to leave the bell, and to leave me then immediately ; but pray do not leave me till then. The sudden attacks of sickness of which she spoke, did indeed come on repeatedly during that day, and I was obliged to leave her several times. After implicitly following her directions I waited in the adjoining room for another summons. In those interviews, I was rejoiced to find that the work of the Divine Refiner was, to all appearance, nearly accomplished. That peace also, which is the fruit of faith in Christ Jesus, that assurance of His forgiveness to herself, which she had never dared to appropriate till then, she now possessed in no common measure.

One of her most esteemed friends, the Rev. Mr. E——, had come from a distance, to see her once again ; and from a remark which he had made, she had been enabled to receive for herself the clear and scriptural doctrine, which she had often heard stated before, but had never been able to realize. The Divine Comforter had, doubtless, opened her understanding to understand his word : for till then, her eyes were holden, and on that

point she knew him not. She was full of faith and hope, and the peaceful calm which seemed shed over her whole spirit, was truly marvellous. But it was God's work, and what is marvellous to us, is easy to Him ! She told me that she had still one fear ; the dread lest her faith should give way at the moment of her departure. 'As for this poor vile body,' she said, 'I care nothing about it. It would not distress me to know that it would be put into a sack, and thrown into a ditch when I am dead ; and after death, I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, I no longer fear to be absent from the body ; for I believe that I shall be present with Him. But I have a dread, even to terror, of that mysterious moment when the body and the soul will be separated. Yes, I will pray against this fear,' she continued, in answer to some observation which I had made, 'and I will strive with His help to believe, that He who has been love and mercy to me, during the whole of my past unprofitable life, will not forsake me then.'

Changed indeed she was—changed in appearance. from the still beautiful person she had been when I first saw her ; frightful had

been the inroads of that fatal disease, even during the interval since our last meeting. Her face had apparently shrunk to half its former size ; her head was entirely uncovered, the slightest covering being heating and oppressive to the brain ; her grey hair was cut as short as it could be without being shaved ; her bed was spread over with white oiled-silk, on account of the sudden vomiting she was constantly seized with, and the oiled-silk covered even the large soft Cashmere shawl, whose white folds were wrapt round her. Still the delicate refinement which had struck me, whenever I had seen her, remained, and her calm, sweet cheerfulness, though subdued by intense pain and weakness, had not disappeared. Her prayer had been answered. She had indeed been kept humble and penitent, and thankful !

One remark which she made, was truly characteristic of her state. ‘I talked to you of being humble,’ she said, ‘when last we met, but I have now learnt that humility is not a thing to be talked about.’ She was still alone. Her doctors could not permit even her two children to be with her. That last day which I spent with her was the Lord’s day,

and its calm peacefulness seemed to harmonize well with the peace which the Lord of that day had shed over her spirit. Her sufferings were not protracted much longer. A letter from her daughter soon brought me the tidings of her death. That dread of some mysterious trial, of which she had spoken to me, and under which she feared lest her trust in God should give way, had proved entirely groundless. Her prayer had been heard. Her heavenly Father had not suffered her at her last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from Him. During the last week of her life, her son and daughter had been with her. She was so perfectly calm, that they were permitted to remain with her altogether. She had sunk so gradually, that for three or four days she was scarcely able to speak; but she had continued to derive great comfort from hearing the word of God occasionally read to her, and to the very last her lips were moving in prayer.

I have introduced the above sketch into this volume, thinking that these pages may fall into the hands of some, as high-born, as beautiful, and as graceful, as Lady ——. But no, there are perhaps very few, who in loveli-

ness of person, and sweetness of manner, could be compared with her. One of the few beloved friends, whom she continued to see during the whole of her illness, the same lady who had first taken me to her, told me that her dying friend, and the celebrated Lady * * *, who was reckoned the most beautiful woman in England for some years, "came out," as it is termed, in the same spring; but that by many, Lady * * * was thought the lovelier of the two.

Thus it is then that we, who are the ministers of God, are brought, by our office, into scenes where the world does not enter, and could give many a warning from what we have seen and heard, which might make the most heedless spirit thoughtful, and appal the stoutest heart.

Others may behold only a light-hearted and joyous throng assembled together, as on some gay festival-day. But see the end of these things. We are as those, who stand at the gate, by which one after one of that careless multitude pass out into a dreary and unknown region. Surely it may be well for *a voice from the gate* to be sometimes heard by that

heedless throng, reminding them that the fashion of this world passeth away—telling them of what we have witnessed *at the gate*, and warning them before it is too late that their turn must also come—that it may come soon, and come suddenly—when they will be forced, each one to obey the mysterious summons, which shall bid them to come forth and separate themselves from their companions, to pass alone—quite alone—through the gate—even the gate and grave of death. For their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.

Many may be as indifferent, as ungodly, as Lady —— was in the days of her youth and beauty, but few may have the benefit—for such it was—of the years which were afforded her ; few the privilege of being called through much tribulation to enter into the kingdom of God. Would that they could have seen her, the mere wreck of what she had once been ; would that they could have seen the deep sorrow with which she regarded her vain and unprofitable course ! But it is not the sight or the knowledge of these things which change the heart ; they sadden or they shock the feelings. Of themselves they can do no

more. It is the province and the prerogative of the Lord God alone to transform a sinful creature, by the renewing of the mind, and the conversion of the heart. But they that would experience the power of this transforming grace, have the means afforded them. A single, earnest, heart-felt prayer for the Holy Spirit, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, will always ascend to a throne of grace, and will not fail to be answered by Him, who is ever more ready to hear than we to pray.

The sketch which follows may present to my reader a striking contrast to the account which I have given of Lady —. In one respect there was a melancholy resemblance between the two sufferers—they both sunk under the same fatal and agonising disease, though one more rapidly than the other. Doubtless the more severe and lengthened discipline of that Divine chastening was more needed by the former sufferer. The one indeed was chosen in the furnace of affliction ; it might be truly said of the other, that the Lord opened her heart while in health and strength, that she attended unto the things that were spoken to her from the word of God. She obeyed at once the Divine call that she

had received, and came forth from the world to devote herself wholly to the service of God. She was as one, to whom an intuitive sense had been given, of which she was herself unconscious, that her sojourn on earth would be short; and truly it might be said that, whatsoever her hand found to do, she "did it with her might, because there was no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither she was hastening."

What is strikingly evidenced in both cases, is this: that however varied the peculiarities of character and circumstances may be, the work of the Holy Spirit is the same in all, the effect the same, the fruit the same, the end also the same.

There is nothing more refreshing to the minister of Christ than to find that the word which God has permitted him to speak from His divine message, and in His name, has been made the power of God unto salvation to some one of the flock committed to his charge. This great work is wholly of God, and he who has been made the honoured instrument in His hands, must, if he knows himself, be filled with astonishment that one so weak and so unworthy, should be permitted

to see such fruit from the seed sown by him. His only exclamation must be ; "what hath God wrought !" But such an event will bring him to a more simple and entire dependance upon God for help, and a more confiding faith, both in His willingness and in His power to save. The minister of Christ, who endeavours to fulfil his high calling, ought indeed never to preach without earnestly and anxiously looking in faith for the conversion of some that are present to hear the preaching of the word ; for it is "God's great ordinance to bring sinners to Christ." We should never enter our pulpits without praying in faith and hope, that the breath of vital life may enter into the heart of some hearer, who has been hitherto as one of the slain in the valley of dry bones. It is the want of this confiding faith, I am convinced, which weakens the ministrations of some of God's otherwise faithful servants. They do not cast their whole care upon Him, in the full persuasion that He can effect the purposes of His infinite wisdom by the foolishness of their preaching, and make His word a weapon of super-human power in the grasp even of the feeblest hand. For He has commanded us

to preach, and He hath promised to be with us to the end of the world ; and when Christ crucified is preached, though it be in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling, the preacher praying in silence, while he speaks aloud, that the word of God may have free course and be glorified, then it frequently happens that God manifests His power in bringing in to the fold of the good Shepherd, some lost or wandering sheep ; perhaps the very one, whom in our fallible judgment, we should have pronounced the most unlikely.

There was a middle-aged gentlewoman whom I found among my congregation at —, plain, even to homeliness in her face and person ; blunt, though not unfeminine in her manner. She was a remarkable contrast to the delicate, refined, and lovely Lady —. She was one of a family of high respectability, and in possession of a competent income ; and was herself a worthy but common-place character. She had been brought up according to the notions of a dry and old fashioned school of divinity : reading such books as good Mr. Nelson's *Fasts and Festivals*, and "The Whole Duty of Man," and fulfilling the daily *task-work* of reading the lessons and

psalms for the day, with little of apprehension or enjoyment in so delightful an occupation as it might have been, had she searched that mine of fine gold as for hid treasure. This daily practice, together with a constant attendance on divine worship upon the Lord's day, constituted her idea of religion. She was bountiful to the poor, and never could have been unkind to any one. But her evenings were passed in the unprofitable round of worldly amusements, in a provincial town. She was hedged round by prejudices of various kinds, and her scheme of salvation was wholly of works, as natural to the unconverted heart, as it is contrary to the glorious simplicity of the gospel faith.

There is a large party of amiable and respectable persons within the pale of the Church of England, who have taken their creed,—if one may give to so vague and undigested a jumble of notions, the name of creed—from the sermons and other books of the kind which abounded during the last century, and from a class of preachers in the present day, who are not much clearer and sounder in their views than the writers of the said sermons. The whole system to which I allude,

is as defective, as it is erroneous : defective, because wanting the strength and the simplicity and the fulness of divine truth ; erroneous, in that it places the whole scheme of salvation upon a wrong foundation, not simply on faith, or rather on Christ as realized by faith ; which if a living faith, *must be* productive of good works ; but on a mixed system of faith and works, in which system, works are made what they never are in the gospel scheme, meritorious and not evidential. I have often wished that those who preach and hold such views, and who esteem themselves at the same time, sound members of the Church of England, would make themselves well acquainted with one sermon by a distinguished divine, whom they look up to as one of the bulwarks of our church, namely, the judicious Hooker. The sermon I allude to, is the one on Justification. They would then see that he clearly proves all such opinions to be nothing less than the doctrine of the Church of Rome.

But no, I would not send them to Hooker, or to any uninspired man, while the plan of salvation is to be found clearly and plainly stated in the inspired volume. I would cite one passage more especially, as containing a

perfect digest of the whole Christian scheme; which is there set forth with a well-ordered arrangement of every point, so lucid and so masterly, that it is impossible, one might almost say, for any preacher who draws his doctrine fresh from the spring of inspired truth, to hold or to teach any other. The passage is this (Eph. ii. 8, 9, 10.) "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast: for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them." Here the great doctrine of salvation by grace, and through faith, is plainly and expressly stated; and this doctrine is shewn to be, under God, productive of those living principles of action, from which alone "all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed." Here the unscriptural objector is answered, who presumes to say, in his vain and limited wisdom; that this wondrous and inspired doctrine that we are justified by faith, tends to licentiousness. And here an objector of another class is silenced, who would entertain the idle fancy that good works can spring from

any source but that of faith in Christ crucified. As soon may the natural, that is, the unconverted man, bring forth the fruits of godliness, as a bramble bear grapes.

The lady of whom I was speaking, was a total stranger to the simple but glorious scheme of salvation, set forth by the Apostle, in that passage in the Ephesians. But when she heard the doctrine plainly preached, it might have been said of her, that the preaching of it, manifested itself at once to her conscience, as the power of God unto salvation. Without delay she closed with its gracious offers. For four years from that time, she was never absent from her place in the congregation, except from illness; she neglected no means of grace which were offered to her, and her growth in spiritual life was rapid. But what distinguished her renewed character, was an unaffected humility, which is perhaps, after all, the most unquestionable evidence of the renewal of our fallen nature after the image of Christ—even the mind that was in Christ Jesus. She was really humble, she never talked about humility, she knew not that she was humble, but this lowly and lovely grace worked like leaven

through every part of her Christian character. She was the truly rare example of one who having heard the word of God, keeps it. She seemed from that time to have but one object to live for, but one thing to do ; to give herself up unreservedly to the service of God. Her unfailing cheerfulness shewed that this was the happiness, the delight of existence to her. However strong the statements she heard from the word of God, however likely to give offence to the pride of the natural heart, she received them with meekness ; believing that as it was His word, it was her part to receive it, not as the word of men, but as it was in truth the word of God. Her life proved that she had received it as an engrafted word, for in simplicity and godly sincerity, she had her conversation in the world. " And whatsoever she did, she did it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men."

I was always struck by the earnestness and diligence with which she obeyed every exhortation of Scripture. She learned from thence that no man can serve two masters, and she instantly gave up the attempt to unite together the two opposite services. She learned from thence that the friendship of the world

is enmity with God ; and she gave up the friendship of the world. She learnt, that she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth ; and without a hesitation, she gave up the vain pleasures of a fallen world, to receive in exchange the sure and solid joy that the world cannot give. She heard that they that were wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps ; and she went to buy, not when the midnight cry came, but long before she was summoned to meet the bridegroom ; so that when her call did come, and she arose and trimmed her lamp, it was not put out in darkness, but the flame rose up in full and steady effulgence, and the darker the night grew, the more brightly did her lamp burn, till the deep shadows were passed, and she had entered into the glory of her Lord. Above all, she learnt from the word of God, that our righteousnesses are but as filthy rags ; and if she had formerly trusted in her own righteousness, (for few perhaps had been so rich in good works,) she cast them all aside, as being unable to save her, or as possessing any merit in the sight of God ; and though she was more than ever devoted to the performance of such works, it was from a new motive that she now acted.

She did all to the glory of God ; humbly and modestly deeming those things, which before she had counted gain, as loss for Christ. She did indeed live a humble, cheerful, active life. Her chief care had formerly been, for the bodies of the poor ; now, though her hand was more open than ever, her chief concern was for their immortal souls.

She was not without those trials which invariably attend the straightforward walk of the child of God. She knew what it was to be misunderstood, misrepresented, to be forsaken by her former associates, and to feel almost desolate, as she told me, when she came to ask my advice on a subject which perplexed her. Alas, there were many circumstances which might have shaken the faith and disturbed the peace of a less decided, and less humble disciple of Christ. They troubled her but for a little time, as stumbling-blocks in her path ; but that path was made so direct and so plain to her eyes, that she stopped but to step over them, and to go forward as before, with a more determined and a meeker spirit. I had spoken from the pulpit, on the subject of the approaching races, and endeavoured to point out the inconsistency

of such amusements with a believer's profession. On her return home from church, she sent for her servants, who had been for many years accustomed to attend the races. She told them plainly that, seeing it to be her duty to God, she had made up her own mind never again to be present at any such diversions, neither could she consent to their going; as she expected her household to follow her example, and to obey her wishes. Her servants had lived with her for many years: they had grown old in her service; and they took the license, which old and spoilt servants are apt to do; they told her plainly, that they could not consent to obey her wishes on that point; and they accompanied their refusal with something like a taunt at her new notions, and her unreasonable strictness. But what she had said, she adhered to: with much kindness she told them, that she should give them a year to consider her orders; and that if at the expiration of that year, they still refused to obey her, she should know how to value their attachment to herself, and their obedience to her desires; and she should dismiss them from her service. The appointed time arrived. She again asked the question: and

two of them again positively refused to obey her. She kept her word ; and she dismissed them both immediately from her service.

But the days on earth of this lowly disciple were numbered. The incurable disease to which I alluded, had begun to undermine her constitution. Its nature was, for some time, as unsuspected by herself, as it was unknown to all but her medical attendant, till within a few weeks of her death. The pain she suffered must have been excruciating, as the disease increased : but she was never heard to murmur. She went about on her visits of mercy to the sick and the poor, with her usual humble, cheerful spirit, finding an enjoyment of the highest kind in reading God's message of love and peace to them ; and supplying their wants with a largeness of spirit, and liberality of hand which seemed to increase, as the period of her stewardship drew towards its close. Her bodily frame was strong even to sturdiness, and her countenance and general appearance gave one the idea of remarkable vigour of constitution. I have met her when the snow covered the ground, and its flakes were falling fast, coming home alone from her daily labour of love among the

poor, and seen her countenance brightened by its kindly smiles on our meeting ; and I have thought to myself that few women were so fitted and framed by nature to brave the inclemency of cold and wintry weather : but ah, I little knew that every step she took, and every effort she made, were accompanied by the painful throbs of that secret malady. She resisted its increasing inroads with astonishing courage, till the torture which she underwent fairly mastered her, and she was forced to give way. The tidings of her illness and of her danger came suddenly upon us. She sent an affectionate message to my wife and to myself, begging us to come to her immediately. We found her in bed, and then learnt that she was never likely to leave it till her death. She was grave, but calm ; and spoke of her state before God, and of her assured and glorious hope with her usual humble, thankful spirit. We were constantly with her during the short time that intervened before her departure ; and we never quitted her chamber without wondering at her extraordinary fortitude and patience under such great and increasing suffering. One night, at a late hour, she again sent for us both. We

found her in a dying state, but supported by the same strong faith, and cheered by the same assurance of hope. She was scarcely able to speak ; but almost the last words we heard from her lips were spoken in a whisper to my wife : " I am on the Rock." The storm was passing over her ; the billows were rising around her ; the testing hour was come ; the edifice was tried to its depths by the assailing shock, but it stood the trial. It fell not, for it was founded upon The Rock.

In humble and adoring faith her redeemed spirit passed from its poor suffering mortal frame, to enter upon its eternal rest. Two days afterwards, when I stood looking down upon her peaceful countenance for the last time, as she lay in her coffin, and thought of her short but decided Christian course, I saw clearly the wonderful mercy of God in all His dealings with her. Known unto Him was that sudden termination which had burst so unexpectedly upon us ; and He had called her aside from the throng of the worldly and the vain, among whom she had not only lived, but of whom she herself was one. He had called her, not by affliction, but by His word and His Spirit ; and she had obeyed the call.

She had left all to follow Him ; and then the affliction came, searching her spirit, and trying her faith. But it found her prepared to meet it. That affliction was indeed ordered of God, to be the last sanctifying ordeal by which she was to be purified, and made meet for that inheritance which God has prepared for all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. One short passage of holy Scripture always seems to me descriptive of her character and of her course : " Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH, AND DISSENTERS.

THE longer I live, the more does my affection deepen and strengthen for the Church of England : and I heartily thank God that I have been permitted to exercise the office of a minister in her Establishment. I trust I am not blinded to her imperfections ; but I can find no other Church so truly in accordance with the word of God. I am aware that her enemies endeavour on many points, to make out a case against her, but with very little success. Her assailants, for instance, on the connexion between Church and State, who do not allow that it is the sacred duty of every christian state to provide for the spiritual wants of the population, have been refuted, not only by unanswerable arguments, but by

undeniable facts; and the working of the voluntary principle in this country and in the western States of America, where it has had a fair trial, appears to me to settle the question; and to prove, that though the voluntary principle may sometimes be grafted upon a Church Establishment with advantage, yet if left to itself in a world like ours, it would too generally meet with no response from the very persons who are most in need of religious instruction.

The saying of Dr. Chalmers, which is not merely a maxim, but an established truth, should never be lost sight of, by those who desire to promote the preaching of the Gospel, and the spread of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; namely, that while in the dealings between man and man, the demand creates the supply, the contrary is the fact with regard to the things of God, and the interest that man may take in them,—there the supply creates the demand. We do not expect to find, and we do not find the inhabitants of any place coming forward in a body to entreat their pastor to preach to them, and to direct them, and to rebuke them, to urge upon them their duties, and to keep ever

before them their privileges. We do not find the principles of the gospel prevailing, and the practice of godliness established in this way. But it is when the pastor exhorts them publicly and from house to house, instant in season and out of season, striving manfully against every discouragement, and praying to God to enable him to overcome every difficulty of opposition or indifference among the members of his flock : it is then that we see the flock assembling round their pastor, and the principles and the practice of the Christian faith flourishing in the place.

As to the theories and the assertions of Dr. Wardlaw, and other opposers of Establishments, the plain argument of fact and of experience, is decidedly against them. This may be seen by all who will make themselves acquainted with the well-known "Essays on the Church," published some years back. There may be, and I trust there will be, great reforms on many points connected with our Church Establishment. There are evils and abuses which ought not to be allowed to exist, and reforms which wise and good men, qualified for the work, may, it is hoped, be appointed to carry out ; but the Church Esta-

blishment itself, is not a question at issue, except, we trust, with those who have not the power to introduce their own systems in its place, and who are doing more harm than good to their own cause, by their unholy and intemperate violence. They declare for instance, that "*a State Church is always a persecuting Church,*" See the "Christian Witness." But the fact that they can publish the most malignant vituperations with impunity, and that instead of persecution, they only meet with the regrets of pious and good men, and the ridicule of others, is of itself a proof of the falsehood of their assertion.

I would not censure those who object to our admirable Liturgy, but I think that we have clear scriptural authority for the services of our Church; and I know, for my own part, that the more frequently I use them, the more deeply do I feel, that any want of spirituality in our formularies, is to be found, not in the Liturgy, but in myself. It is an eminently scriptural and spiritual form of worship; and I suspect that those who complain of its length and its weariness, would on examining their own hearts, discover that they do not rise to the height

of its spirituality, and that it does not come down to their own low and unspiritual level. It is also one great argument in favour of our Liturgy, that even if there should be unsound teaching or an uncertain preaching from the pulpit, there is scriptural truth set forth from the reading-desk. Whenever we are gathered together in our public worship, there is always a certain portion of the word of God read in the ears of the people—several of the Psalms—a whole chapter from the Old and from the New Testaments, besides the Epistle and Gospel for the day. One can scarcely refrain from smiling at the solemn and violent attacks that are sometimes made against forms of prayer, when we never find an instance of a dissenting congregation who do not employ forms of praise. If praise must be deemed worship of a higher and more spiritualized character than prayer; and if forms are yet objected to, as opposed to spirituality, they must be still more unsuited for praise than for prayer. I have never heard in what way our dissenting brethren have been able to answer the above argument.

I love to express the decided and increasing preference I feel for our own mode of worship;

and if some of our careless congregations were but to do common justice to their own beautiful Liturgy—if all were to kneel meekly on their knees in confession and prayer—if the responses were made as with one heart and one voice, by all assembled—if the voices of all present rose in one swelling song of praise and thanksgiving, we should never hear complaints of the length or the weariness of the noble service ; but how can it be otherwise than wearisome to those who, though present, take little or no part in it, who never bend the knee, who never open their lips from the time they enter the house of prayer to that of their departure. A service without responses and without congregational singing, is not the service of the Church of England. The Dissenters however, should bear in mind that the really scriptural members of our Church are no more disposed than themselves, to look upon our formularies as free from imperfection. We do not confound the Prayer-book with the Bible. In our opinion the Bible stands alone. We regard the scheme of doctrine, and the system of discipline, which is embodied in our Articles and Liturgy, as better, far better than any other, simply be-

cause to us they appear most in accordance with the word of inspiration; and we are therefore satisfied to remain within the pale of our establishment till a purer church can be found than any now existing on earth.

There are however, two of our thirty-nine Articles which shew at once in plainest language, what was the spirit of those who framed them, and what is, or ought to be, the spirit of those who subscribe to them. I allude to the sixth and the twentieth Articles. The sixth declares, that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation:" the twentieth decides that "the Church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith: and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a *witness and keeper* of Holy Writ; yet, as it ought not to decree anything against

the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation." I would therefore, for my own part, repudiate every thing and any thing in my beloved Church, which is not in accordance with the word of God ; and if I am told that such being the case, I cannot defend a word or two here or there in our formularies, I would reply—"What man on earth, or what body of men, will you find, who can be perfect ? "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." James iii. 2. And I would remind the unholy and uncandid who shoot forth their sharp arrows, even bitter words, that the Lord has said, see Isaiah xxix. 20, 21. "The scorner is consumed, and all who watch for iniquity are cut off, that make a man an offender for a word." At the same time I would frankly avow, that I should rejoice to see every unscriptural and even dubious word that could be found in our formularies—if but a single word—expunged or altered. Still it would be at a dangerous risk in these times, for a council of men to be appointed to revise them ; lest from removing a few blemishes, almost unavoidable in every work of man, they should go on to change or to dilute some

of its most important parts. We cannot forget the attempts of the Feathers' Tavern Association to obtain relief from subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, in which, among others of the clergy, good Bishop Porteus, if I mistake not, was carried away.

When we take, not a single expression, but the whole scope of our Articles and our Liturgy, and consider the sense of the whole, I think we shall look in vain for a more scriptural and evangelical scheme and system of Christianity, except in that one most sacred volume, which must ever stand alone, apart from, and above all other books. And the member of our Church who is told by an opponent, that in holding our Articles and Liturgy he is consenting to error even in a slight degree, may be always referred to the Articles which I have cited above, as expressing the views of himself and of his Church. Those Dissenters who profess to value the truth, and the liberty of conscience, which they now possess, may therefore thank God, that in the Established Church of their country (with all its errors in their eyes) they have a bulwark of defence from the tyranny of the unscriptural Church of Rome, a bulwark they

might in vain long for, if they were unhappily to succeed in their unholy endeavours to overthrow our present Establishment.

I will yield to no one in my attachment to the Established Church in this country. I love her Articles, I love her Liturgy, I love her members—and is it possible then that I can love those who dissent from her? My answer is a very plain one, I love all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and therefore I love many Dissenters. I may think them mistaken and even wrong, in some things. I do not love or approve of dissent, but I cannot think that any follower of our blessed Lord is justified in cherishing bitterness of feeling, or expressing himself with harshness or unkindness towards his dissenting brethren. It is no extenuation of such a spirit, to say, and to say in some cases with truth—that Dissenters are bitter and hostile in their conduct towards ourselves. Let it be even allowed that such is too often the case,—are we to return evil for evil, railing for railing? I speak rather from the report of others than from my own experience, when I say “let this be allowed.” I must plainly declare, that in all the intercourse I have had with Dis-

senters, I have never met with unkindness, but in one instance, and never with rudeness or harshness—but with respect and kindness even to courteousness. The one instance to which I allude was this:—It is a long time ago, perhaps four-and-twenty years. A Dissenting minister, residing and preaching in my own parish, applied to me for a subscription towards the building or the repairs, I forget which, of his chapel. I replied plainly, but in a kind spirit, to his letter, by saying that I could not do so conscientiously, and therefore that I must decline sending him anything. I received rather a violent epistle in answer to mine ; my correspondent asserting, among other charges, which he brought against me, that in my refusal to assist him, I had violated our Lord's injunction, "Give to every one that asketh ;" rather a strange application it seemed to me, of the broad and general principle of Christian liberality. But the angry writer was really a good and kind-hearted man, though I do not think that he did well to be angry. My mind was made up on the subject, and I had no wish to continue a correspondence with him, but I knew that a mild answer turneth away wrath ; and I

wrote him another and much longer letter, telling him, first of all, that while I could not agree to his interpretation of the Divine command, I would willingly have contributed to the utmost in my power, had the appeal been made for the relief of a dissenting brother's personal wants ; and that I should have deemed it a privilege to respond to such a call ; but I added that, without entering into the question whether a clergyman of the Church of England was, or was not, justified in contributing to the building of a dissenting chapel, I begged to state, with all Christian affection, but with all candour, that I conscientiously differed from the views he held, and the doctrines he taught, on some essential points ; and, therefore, that I could not consistently subscribe towards his chapel. Another letter came from the good man. It made more than amends for any unkindness in his former expressions, by the truly Christian and affectionate spirit which it displayed.

It does appear to me that, whether in the presence or absence of dissenters, whether in our books or our sermons, a Christian minister and a Christian gentleman is strangely forgetful of his character and calling, who

does not seek to obey the apostolical injunction, "Be courteous," and does not rather in the spirit of the meekness and gentleness of Christ, beseech those that oppose themselves.

There need be no compromise of our own principles, no appearance of agreement on any point, in which a conscientious and faithful churchman differs from a dissenter; but when the difference is,—as it usually happens with an orthodox dissenter,—not on points of doctrine, but of discipline, or church government, or the mode of conducting Divine worship, there can be no possible reason why one godly man may not meet on friendly terms with another godly man on earth, for they both look forward to an eternal union in heaven.

"God gave Solomon largeness of heart." I often think of these words, when I hear the observations of some of our younger brethren in the ministry. They would shew their wisdom in seeking this great gift, for it is often sadly needed. They would find this largeness of heart a noble preservative from those petty irritations, those fretting vexations, which are apt to ruffle the calm of the inward man, and to produce a spirit of unkind and unhallowed resentment towards fancied

or real opponents. They would do well to remember, on many such occasions, that when the disciples came to Jesus with this complaint—"We saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not us:" our Lord replied; "Forbid him not."

A young clergyman, anxious to fulfil the duties of his high calling, comes, for the first time, to a parish. The place has been much neglected for many years. His predecessors have been careless and unfaithful men. They have never visited the people; they have hurried over the Liturgy of the Church; and their sermons have had neither sense nor soundness in them, but have been nothing more nor less than dull, unintelligible treatises, about which the hearer has felt only a sense of relief when the twenty minutes were over, and the infliction of the dull and heartless address had been endured. The new rector is a different kind of person. He is filled with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of the souls committed to his charge. He endeavours to make a full proof of his ministry, and his doctrine is purely scriptural, his walk exemplary; but during the time of the former incumbent, a

large dissenting chapel was built in the parish, and a portion of his people are dissenters, and do not seem inclined to leave their chapel and come to church. This is a source of daily annoyance to him. He says to himself ; 'The dissenting minister is not wanted here, his work is done. He may have been useful in former times, and was perhaps needed then ; but now he ought to go. I wish his chapel were shut up. I wish he would not draw my flock away from me. I wish he would go ; and if he loved the truth, as I suppose he does, I think he would go.'

I will not ask, is this right ? but is this reasonable ? The lower classes usually know little of the real points at issue between dissenters and churchmen. They begin to love and respect their new rector, and they may sometimes attend his church ; but they have long known and loved the dissenting minister. He is a kind, good man, and they cannot exactly see why they are to leave him. Old associations, and warm attachments, influence them. They have perhaps gone to chapel from their childhood, and to chapel they continue to go.

In such a case as this, the young clergyman

will prove himself a wise man if he holds his peace, and bears his trial with meekness and gentleness. He may assure himself of this, that he will not mend matters by attacking the dissenters from the pulpit, or complaining of them out of it. "I found my parish full of dissenters," said a young clergyman to me. "so I determined to let the people know my mind on the subject, and I often do so."—

"And I can tell you beforehand," I replied, "what has been the effect of your attacks from the pulpit upon dissenters; you have added to their number, and thinned your own congregation." "Well, I own it is so," he answered. "And I hardly know how it could be otherwise," I said: "Speak as temperately as you will—much that you say will be misunderstood. You will thus grieve the godly among them, and give importance, in their own eyes, to others. It is not wise or right to stir up the spirit of contradiction, natural to the human heart. We should learn to make allowances even for the prejudices of others; and you would do more by a kind and winning demeanour, than by all your expostulations and reproaches." I remember hearing of an amiable young man, who was appointed to the charge

of a large parish, in which a great proportion of his flock were dissenters. He was a man of pleasing appearance, and an earnest preacher ; and the dissenters came in large numbers to hear him. His spacious Church was beginning to fill ; but he heard that many of his congregation were still accustomed to go once in the day to the dissenting chapel ; and he told them from the pulpit, that if they did not leave the chapel entirely, and come altogether to Church, they had better stay away. Probably they would soon have come to Church, and were intending to do so ; but the consequence of his indiscreet conduct was, that they took him at his word, and did not come again to the Church. A gentleman who happened to be in the Church some months afterwards, told me that there were but sixty persons in the body of the church, and very few in the galleries ; and that the large building had a dreary look from its emptiness. I believe he resigned the parish soon after, and that he has since learnt a wiser way by his dear-bought experience.

Let me here add, that however advisable a clergyman may deem it for a dissenting minister to leave his parish, it is not to

be expected that the latter will be of the same mind on the subject. To say nothing of his differences in opinion, he has perhaps no other means of subsistence for his wife and children and himself, but that which he derives from his occupation ; and as he is not likely to go, the clergyman must make up his mind to his remaining. The best thing that he can do, is to take care lest by any want of earnestness and diligence on his own part, comparisons should be drawn between them to his own disadvantage. The name or office of a clergyman are nothing, or less than nothing, unless associated with the spirit and character of one who aspires with all his heart to prove himself, both by his preaching and living, a faithful minister of Christ, and steward of the mysteries of God.

If indeed a parish is extensive, and the church accommodation not sufficient for the people, the clergyman's first wish may be to enlarge his own church, or to build another ; and this he may endeavour to do, and probably succeed in doing, but even then it often happens that the church accommodation is not sufficient for the population of the place. It will in that case, I am told, be advisable

to build another ; advisable I allow, but it may not be possible to raise the money to do so. Ought we not then to rejoice if that portion of our population for whom we cannot find room in our churches, have the opportunity of hearing the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ faithfully preached in a dissenting chapel ? For my own part, I can say from my heart, I should rejoice to know that my parishioners, if placed in such circumstances, had the desire and the opportunity of hearing the Truth from the lips of a godly dissenting minister. Souls are perishing for lack of knowledge, even the knowledge of Jesus Christ and the way of life through Him ; and there is a preacher of Christ crucified, with the word of God open before him, able and willing to feed them with the bread of life. True, he followeth not us ; but He loves Christ, and he follows Him.

What says the great Apostle, "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife ; and some also of good will. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds ; but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then ? notwithstanding,

every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice!"* God gave to the Apostle Paul largeness of heart to speak thus. I must humbly thank God if He give me also largeness of heart to breathe the same spirit and to speak the same language. "Christ is preached," I also say, "and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." But in saying this, I speak only of those Dissenters, who preach Christ plainly and faithfully; between whom, and our own scriptural church, the difference is in discipline, not in doctrine. There are two bodies of Dissenters with whom there can be no agreement, for the difference is of the gravest character. The Unitarians, who deny the Divinity of our Blessed Redeemer; and the Romanists, who make the word of God of none effect through their traditions. The latter may term us heretics, but we rejoice to confess, that "after the way which they call heresy, so worship we the God of our fathers." There is but one gospel, the same which is set forth and preached by our Lord and His inspired Apostles, and we remember the words of the great preacher and

* Phil. i. 15—18.

Apostle of Christ to the Gentiles, when he speaks by the Spirit of God of those who perverted the gospel of Christ, and preached "another gospel." He adds, "Which is not another," there being but one true gospel. "But, though we," he continues, "or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." * Alas, it is grievous to find clergymen in our own Church, seeming to dread a kind of contamination from intercourse with orthodox and godly Dissenters, and at the same time regarding with complacency the monstrous errors of the Church of Rome. I do not hesitate to speak thus plainly. So far from thinking that it becomes me or any clergyman really attached to our Church to be silent on this subject, we, as their fellow-ministers, are the most disgraced by their conduct, and it is our duty to declare openly, that we cannot recognize such men as sound Churchmen. It is not long ago that I found a distinguished foreigner, a Protestant, and a minister of the gospel, whose name is well known to the public, asserting his belief that the greater portion of our

* Gal. i. 7, 8.

clergy were influenced by the doctrines of the Romish Church, and were more or less Tractarians in their sentiments. I plainly told him that he was wrongly informed, and assured him of the fact, that there is scarcely an instance to be found of one truly enlightened and established clergyman of the Church of England who has not stood firm, and proved faithful to the principles of the word of God, amid the shaking and sifting of the unstable and inexperienced around him.

M. M——D'A——— had received his information, I fear, from those who ought to have known better than to have brought so false an accusation against our Church. He had come to the house where I was also at that time a guest, from the midst of the party to whom I allude. But he is not the only foreign clergyman who has been misled by the same sad misrepresentations. Still, I rejoice to think that there are very many conscientious dissenters from our Church, who would nobly disdain to take advantage of the trials to which the national Establishment has been of late years exposed, by the false teaching and subsequent defection of some of her unsound members.

"Do not suppose," said an excellent Dissenting minister to me ; "that we are all to be numbered among the political agitators of the day ; or that we approve the attacks that are made upon your church. But those who make the most noise always attract the most notice, and are often erroneously supposed to represent the opinions of the whole body." I cannot close this chapter without bearing my testimony to the lovely and Christian spirit which I have met with towards our own Church among many distinguished Dissenters. I can never forget the debt of gratitude I owe to a venerable Dissenting minister with whom I became acquainted soon after my ordination. He was a man of extensive reading, and one of the finest Hebrew scholars of his day ; but he was what is far better, a man of enlarged mind, and loved all who loved the Lord Jesus Christ. He was free from sectarian bitterness, nay so far was he from cherishing hostile feelings towards the Established Church of his country, that I have often heard him speak in terms of high admiration of our beautiful Liturgy. The kindness and the respect with which he treated me, when I was a young and inexperienced

curate, made a deep impression on my heart; and during my intercourse with him, I began to regret the unjust and illiberal prejudices I had before held against Dissenters. Some of the most valuable instruction I ever received on the important subject of the wide distinction between the covenant of works, and that of grace, and the two dispensations of the law and the gospel, was from the conversation of that wise and good old man, and I must ever hold his memory in grateful remembrance. On our leaving the place, where we had lived together in harmony for several years, he took my hand, and the hand of my wife in each of his, and said, in a voice faltering with emotion, "The angel of His presence go with you, my dear young friends, and bless you wherever you go."

It was afterwards my privilege, for such indeed I deem it, to be called to attend at the death-beds of two other godly and aged dissenting ministers; one of them I constantly visited as his chosen friend to the last, and I was kneeling by his bed-side, the witness of his glorious faith and blessed hope, almost up to the hour when his gentle spirit passed away in perfect peace.

The other was a man of a sterner cast of character, but not less distinguished for his faith and devotedness in the service of our blessed Lord. On one occasion, he turned to me, and to another young clergyman who had come with me to visit him. "You two young ministers," he said, "are faithful, I believe, to your calling; and I rejoice to hear the good report that I do of you. But it often happens, that faithful and zealous ministers of your church, prepare the way for dissenters in a place. For depend upon it, young gentlemen, when you, and such as you are removed, the people who are fed by a true shepherd, will never put up with the scanty fare, which a hireling may set before them, if they should be succeeded by such. And if the sheep cannot have the gospel faithfully preached in the church, they will go after it to the dissenting chapel."

I was with him not long before his death; and, in a most solemn manner, he said: "I am as one about to put off my harness; my fight is fought; my work is done. You, Sir, are but as one who has lately put on your harness; and you have perhaps a long and wearisome fight before you. May God make

you a good soldier, and enable you to endure hardness, in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ."

I had also the privilege of the acquaintance of the saintly John Elias, a remarkable man, whose extraordinary influence among his countrymen, gained for him the name of the Apostle of North Wales. I have seldom met with so much meekness of wisdom in any one. I was struck by the high respect and esteem, which he expressed, when speaking of one of my kindest and most revered friends, then Bishop of Chester, and now the Primate of our Church. "I do not know him personally," he said, "but I have long known, long observed him, and marked the spirit of holy wisdom and Christian love which he manifests on all occasions. Will you offer to your Bishop," he added, "my Christian respects; will you tell him that I * mind him on my knees."

Another distinguished leader among the godly dissenters once said to me: "If all the Bishops were like your Bishop, I think you would find me creeping in at a corner of your church."

* He seemed to think in Welch, and to turn his expressions into English when he spoke.

But I may be told that this is a strange and unusual strain of writing in a clergyman of the Church of England. If it be so, I can only say, I grieve to hear it. I do not think it ought to be so, nor do I care to shun the reproach—if any should deem it such—of being the friend of any godly man, who, though not a member of the Church of England, is assuredly a member of the Church of Christ. I hope to meet such men in the Church Triumphant above, and though they may not wear the same uniform, nor serve in the same corps with myself in the Church Militant below, I cannot look upon them but as fellow-soldiers, while they fight beneath the same banner, and under the same great Captain of the Lord's hosts. I look upon them as mistaken on some points, which are certainly not essential to salvation, and regard their system as defective, when compared with our own ; this is their loss, but this is no reason why I should be wanting in Christian kindness and Christian courtesy to them.

While I see them too often still more and more estranged by the treatment they sometimes meet with, I can only say, for my own part, that I have seen them won by gentleness

and cordiality. I have seen my own congregations swelled by their members, and I could name, at this very time, many valued friends, whom I have been the honoured means of winning over to our own church. They were at one time zealous dissenters. Some of them are now devoted clergymen in the Established Church, others are preparing for ordination.

The last twenty years have been times of unusual trial to the true members of the Established Church. Before that period she appeared to be in a flourishing and vigorous state ; excellent and godly men abounded then, as they do now among the ministers ; and many amiable, but less advanced clergymen, chiefly young or inexperienced men, appeared to be won, by the holy consistency, of what is called the Evangelical party. There was a growing friendliness between the two parties, courtesy and winningness on the one side, and humility and respect on the other. The various bodies of dissenters seemed to have forgotten their feelings of hostility towards the Established Church : whatever may be the faults of her system, they did not identify the errors and inconsistencies of too many of her members with that system, nor confound

the godly with the ungodly ; they acknowledged that the errors of the unsound churchman were to be charged, not on his Church, but on himself.

The trials of our Church, however, have since been many. Some dissenters have taken advantage of our disunited state, and have made unfair attacks upon the Establishment ; attacks which can only prove in the end injurious to themselves, and which are, even now, destructive of their own peace of mind and personal godliness.

But our sorest trials have arisen among our own false brethren. The questions which have been lately agitated about the rubrics and the surplice, &c, were not worthy of the importance given to them ; but had points of discipline alone been involved, the lovers of scriptural truth, whether among the clergy or the laity, would probably have been regarded then with as much interest as they deserved. One thing indeed, is certain, that the endeavour to restore church order, commenced, not with the Tractarian, but with the Evangelical clergy. There was then, and there still is, an earnest desire, on their part, that all things should "be done decently and in order ;" but

had no such desires existed, they would have welcomed a healthy movement on such points, and even regarded a morbid and puerile reaction on subjects of discipline alone, as harmless and unimportant.

Questions, however, of the gravest importance have arisen, in the bosom of our own Church, not on points of discipline, but involving doctrines of vital and saving truth, and filling the hearts of her sound and godly members with sorrow and shame. The great doctrine of Justification by Faith has been openly attacked. This important doctrine, the palladium of every true Church of Christ, has even been termed "Nehushtan" by some sneering and bitter assailants of evangelical truth. And, with regard to another vital question, namely, Regeneration as connected with Baptism, language has been used, not only at variance with the Articles of our Church, but nearly word for word with the dogmas of the Council of Trent on the subject, in which the *opus operatum* has been attributed to the outward and visible form of the ordinance. No one who will be at the trouble of reading the decrees of the said Council, can fail of being struck with the resemblance of which I speak.

Since I wrote the above, a valued friend has pointed out to me the following passage from the pen of Archbishop Sancroft. I had forgotten it, having read his life many years ago. I rejoice to bring forward such an extract from the writings of an Archbishop of our Church, and a nonjuror, confirming my own views on Dissent and Romanism, and distinctly opposed to the opinions and the practice of many in the present day, to whom we look in vain for the spirit and the practice of the good old Primate of those days. The passage occurs in his published Injunctions. He urges upon his clergy "that they walk in wisdom, towards those that are not of our communion ; and if there be in their parishes any such, that they neglect not frequently to confer with them in the spirit of meekness, seeking by all good ways and means to gain and win them over to our communion. More especially that they have a very tender regard to our brethren the Protestant Dissenters ; that upon occasion offered, they visit them at their houses and receive them kindly at their own, discoursing calmly and civilly with them ; persuading them (if it may be) to a full compliance with our Church, or at least that " whereto we

have already attained, we may all walk by the same rule and mind the same thing." And in order hereunto, that they take all opportunities of assuring and convincing them, that the bishops of the Church are really and sincerely irreconcilable enemies to the errors, superstitions, idolatries, and tyrannies of the Church of Rome, and that the very unkind jealousies which some have had of us to the contrary, were altogether groundless. And in the last place that they warmly and most affectionately exhort them to join us in daily fervent prayer to the God of peace, for the universal blessed union of all reformed churches, both at home and abroad, against our common enemies; that all they who do confess the holy name of our dear Lord, and do agree in the truth of his holy word, may also meet in one holy communion, and live in perfect unity and godly love."*

It is a source of inexpressible gratitude before Almighty God, to the great body of the Protestant Church in these realms, that, in our present Primate, we have one of a like spirit with Archbishop Sancroft.

* D'Oyly's *Life of Sancroft*, p. 196.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ROMANISM AND THE WORD OF GOD.

It is with sorrow of heart that those who really value the truth, have observed of late years the increasing influence of the Church of Rome in this country. It is just that her members should enjoy that civil liberty which is the right of every British subject : but it is a false and fatal liberality to encourage error of any kind. It is also a fallacy to say that Rome has lost its persecuting spirit ; for according to its own avowed tenet, its system changes not. Deprived of power, it cannot persecute ; but give it power, and the spirit of persecution appears immediately. Such has always been the case, and up to the present hour, the Romish Church has manifested the same spirit. This has been seen in Madeira

and Ireland. But supposing it to be agreed that the times of Romish persecution have passed away for ever, the simple fact that the system itself is a mass of unscriptural error, is one that cannot be denied by those who know the value of the pure word of truth, as contained in the Bible, and in the Bible alone. This is the great argument against Rome: and he who knows any thing of the unspeakable value of Divine truth, should not consent to take any lower ground.

The Bible and the Church of Rome cannot stand together, for truth and error can hold no fellowship the one with the other. Truth, however, is imperishable; and, therefore, though error may prevail for a time, it must be finally overthrown.

I frankly confess, that many years ago, I held the too common opinion, that there was little or no important difference between our own Church and that of Rome; and the opinions which I heard occasionally from the lips of some sound members of the Church of England, expressive of their thorough disapprobation of the Romish heresy, appeared to me alike unjust and uncharitable. The truth is, that I was ignorant; and owing to my

ignorance, I was incapable of forming a correct opinion on the subject. I thank God I am not ignorant now. But the more I know of the Romish religion, the more am I convinced that nothing short of a clear and vital knowledge of the word of God, can enable any one to refute or to withstand the insidious devices of that Protean Church. I own I am sometimes amazed at the deplorable ignorance manifested by men of intellect and education, on this subject. I cannot suppose that statesmen, honest on other points, would debase themselves to adopt an unprincipled expediency on this one important question; and, therefore, I can only attribute the arguments which they put forth, to their own ignorance of scriptural truth.

But, alas, not only among our statesmen, but among the clergy and laity of this highly-favoured country, we too often find that a bold and uncompromising protest against Romanism, is looked upon as equally ill-judged and uncharitable. And yet it is not to be wondered at, when we think of the mystery of iniquity, and the deceivableness of unrighteousness, which is interwoven so alluringly throughout the whole system of the

Church of Rome, making itself all things to all men, in order that it may ensnare all. Let however, a determined and searching spirit set himself vigorously to the work of piercing through the various blinds which present themselves to the unwary and unsuspecting, the subterfuges, at once so plausible and so dangerous, with which she accommodates herself to every possible difficulty the doubting enquirer may encounter ; and he will find that Rome is what she always was, stern in her real features, inflexible in her true character, yielding nothing, abating nothing, conceding nothing, grasping at universal dominion ; unscrupulous as she is unpitying in the means she uses to secure her ends ; and allowing no appeal from the dictum of *the Church*, that title which she arrogantly appropriates to herself alone.

A clergyman of the Established Protestant Church in Ireland, a young man of distinguished talent and high character, who was formerly a Romanist, assured me that for some years before he openly avowed himself a Protestant, he was secretly convinced that the Church of Rome was not the true Church of Christ ; and that it was his duty to leave

her community. "But," he added, "it has often happened, that when I had almost made up my mind to come out of her, and to obey the dictates of my conscience, the curses which I have heard uttered by the priests from the altar, against all Protestants, were so awful, and their effect upon me so appalling, that on quitting the chapel, I have shuddered to think on the danger I had escaped by not having declared myself a Protestant. I have thanked God as if I had been saved from hell. Such, alas, is the fascination of that mysterious terror, the spell of that powerful enthrallment which the Church of Rome exercises over her members, to keep them in subjection to her sway. In the case of this young clergyman, the conviction of truth in his own conscience, proved still more powerful than the mysterious influence of that apostate Church; and before many years had passed away, he stood forth a bold and faithful witness for the truth; and has since proved a powerful and consistent preacher of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have the privilege of being acquainted with several individuals, in various grades of society, who have in like manner, by the

grace of God emancipated themselves from the bondage of the Church of Rome. I could bring the account of many before my readers, some of which occurred under my own observation. At present, however, I select but the following simple, and touching instance of the power of the word of God, working almost without the aid of human instrumentality.

A poor widow, belonging to my own congregation, came to me one Sunday afternoon, at the conclusion of the evening service, entreating me to go with her immediately to one of her neighbours, who was almost inconsolable, one of her children having been frightfully burnt. No hopes were entertained of its recovery. The poor mother was a young woman, by profession a Roman Catholic; but the father was a Protestant. This I learned on my way to the house; I found the account of the child's state but too true, and the mother's grief was very affecting. The child died. I endeavoured, on that occasion, and on my subsequent visits, when attempting to console the disconsolate woman, to point out to her the only source of solid comfort, praying with her and her husband that our gracious God, without whom not a sparrow falleth

to the ground, might enable her to say, "Thy will be done:" and to perceive the love of God in that severe and mysterious chastening. In the few interviews which I had with her, I was struck by the ignorance of the afflicted woman, an ignorance which seemed to me almost inconceivable in one bearing the name of a christian. Nothing that I could say with reference to the word of God, seemed to possess the least interest with her. She gave me, however, to understand that she was a Roman Catholic, and though she seemed thankful and pleased by the sympathy which I expressed for her grief, and the relief which I gave her, she quietly but sullenly repulsed all questions of a religious character. I think it was on the last visit which I paid her, that I put into her hands a New Testament; and earnestly entreated her to read it with prayer for the teaching of the Holy Spirit. But I said nothing about her particular creed. I felt that the great object to be gained was, to lead her to the knowledge of God in Christ, as He has revealed Himself in the one book which He has given us.

"The entrance of thy word," saith the Psalmist, "giveth light; it giveth understand-

ing to the simple." * I left the book of life with her, praying that she might be induced to open it, and to search it, and that the entrance of its words into her heart, might bring with them light and understanding.

She soon after left that part of the town, and I lost sight of her altogether.

Three years had passed away, when a pious friend, who was a constant visitor among the poor, told me, at the conclusion of my evening lecture, that a poor sick woman, named W—, was anxiously longing to see me ; and that she had been hoping that I should find her out, as I had been kind to her some years before. Till then I had been quite ignorant of the place of her residence, nor had I thought it likely, humanly speaking, that she would care to see me again. Indeed, when my friend first spoke of her, I had but a faint recollection of the person, the Welsh names being common in C—. But when she mentioned that her child had been burned to death, and that the woman was a Romanist, I not only identified the person, but felt my interest awakened about her. I had, however, no conception of the marvellous change which

* Psalm cxix. 130.

I was about to witness in that poor sick woman. I found her sadly altered in personal appearance; worn and wasted by intense bodily suffering; her large grey eyes dilated, and the blue veins in her pale forehead distinctly marked, owing to the attenuation of her whole face and frame. She received me with delight, though her first words were exclamations of reproach because I had not come sooner to see her. But the extraordinary change to which I allude was not as to the bodily health of the poor sufferer. She had become in heart and spirit a new creature. The deadness as to spiritual things, which had before amounted almost to obtuseness of intellect, was gone; and the vigour of thought, and the clearness of conception with which she spoke of her own state before God, and of the preciousness of His blessed word to her soul, filled me with amazement. I sat and listened to her quietly; I asked no questions, while she continued to talk in a strain of heaven-taught wisdom, which shewed, that on every point connected with her immortal hopes, she had passed from darkness to light, and from the bondage of Satan into the glorious liberty of the children of God. I learnt that a friend

of mine, who had been for a short time resident in Chester, and while there, a member of my congregation, had found her out in one of his visits among the poor ; and touched by her suffering, had visited her frequently. He had read to her, and prayed with her ; but she confessed to me, that at first she had much disliked his visits, and felt greatly annoyed whenever the door opened and he appeared. She had been long before that time under deep and secret convictions, but she had been alarmed by them to a degree scarcely credible ; she had been terrified at the idea of yielding to them ; he had been made the honoured instrument, almost against her will, of forcing and fixing her attention to the word of God, and to the divine doctrines which had come with light, though not with liberty, into her heart. He had probably never been aware of the extreme dislike which she had at first felt to his visits. She would afterwards have rejoiced to see him, but he had left Chester. The words of the Psalmist however, had been literally fulfilled in her case. The entrance of the word of God had given light and understanding. "That New Testament, Sir," she said, "which you gave me three years ago,

I cannot tell you how I prize it: it is every thing to me! I often felt, after you had left it, as if I could not help taking it out, and reading it; but after I had read a few verses, I used to shut it almost with horror, and feel as if I had committed a crime; and then I thought I would never look at it again. But, again I opened it, again I read, and again I closed it with the same feeling of having done wrong." "But why was this?" I asked. I was well aware of what she had to tell me; but I waited to hear the reason of that terror of which she spoke, from her own lips. "It was the word of God, was it not," I asked? "Yes, Sir," she replied; "but I could not help feeling afraid after having looked into it." "But why afraid?" I repeated. "Oh, Sir, you must know," she said, with a look of astonishment at my ignorance on such a point, "you must know that our priests do not allow us to read the Bible." * I am only recording

* Not many weeks have passed, since a Romish Priest at Birmingham took away a New Testament from a little girl who attended the Free Industrial School in that town, and burnt the sacred volume, declaring at the same time, that he would burn every Bible or Tract which he found in the houses of any of his people. He also took upon himself to forbid the Clergyman of the parish or district, to enter the house of any Romanist there.

A plain statement of the whole affair may be found in a valua-

a fact. I say this, because on a former occasion, when relating another fact which illustrated the real character of the Romish heresy, at a public meeting in Chester, I was afterwards violently and bitterly attacked from several quarters, for my want of charity ; and even accused of manifesting a "Satanic spirit." I perfectly recollect those circumstances also, and they will probably find a place in a future volume. These are not times when lovers of scriptural truth, should hold their peace, or withhold their testimony. Truth and a clear conscience should make them bold in exposing the wily practices of that false and fallen church, which is leaving no means untried to regain its long-lost power in this most favoured country. On every side we see that efforts are making to revive the senseless and degrading superstitions of the darker ages ; and in fact, wherever Rome obtains ascendancy, the superstitions of the darker ages reappear. The human heart, unfortified by the principles of divine truth, has given proof

ble sermon, preached on the occasion, in St. Martin's Church, Birmingham, by the Rev. C. Miller, Rector of St. Martin's. The sermon, from its low price of threepence, is within the reach of all readers, and is well worth reading. It is published by Hamilton and Adams, and Wertheim.

enough, in these enlightened times, as they are termed, of inability to withstand the absurd, but ensnaring sophistries of the most cunningly-devised system which was ever framed by the great adversary.

I was not surprised by the statement of the sick woman, that the Bible was a forbidden book ; but I had no wish to pursue the subject with her, nor did I, in any of my interviews, question her as to the practices of the Romish priests. She told me afterwards that she had been vexed with her husband, who avowed himself to be a Protestant, for sending without her knowledge, to ask the priest to visit her. Whether he came or not, I do not remember ; my impression is that he did come, and that she told him she had found all that she needed in the word of God. I have no reason to suppose that he said, or would have said, a harsh or an unkind word to her, or that she would have spoken in an improper spirit to him. She had not so learned Christ. But the remarkable firmness of her renewed character, and the clear and collected state of her mind, would have proved to him, that any attempt to shake her faith, or to change her decision, was beyond the power of man.

Some of the members of the Roman Catholic congregation came once or twice to visit her, and the servant of a kind-hearted lady brought her some relief in food and money—but she said to me, when speaking on the subject, “I begged the servant to thank the lady, and to say, that I did not wish to trouble them for any thing. I thought it better, Sir, not to have any of them about me.”

When I had visited her some years before, her husband was in full employment, and though an elderly man, able to obtain sufficient for a comfortable subsistence. But they were now reduced almost to poverty, and he was often absent in Wales for weeks at a time. I found on questioning her eldest boy, a remarkably intelligent child, that she was sometimes in want even of food; and I told the boy, whenever he saw this to be the case, to come to me without telling his mother, that I might send her the assistance she needed. He took me at my word, saying in his artless manner, “Sir, if you please, you told me to come, for my mother has nothing to eat; and you said you would send her whatever she wanted.” She was much distressed when she found that the little fellow had been to me,

and assured me that she had not known of his coming. She was indeed remarkably disinterested, notwithstanding her poverty ; she uttered no complaints, and never asked for relief. She seemed only to care for spiritual aid, and never seemed distressed except when my visits were interrupted. I have seldom witnessed more grievous suffering. I never found her free from torturing pains : but even when her whole frame was drawn together with convulsive pangs, and writhing with agony, she would continue to speak with the same energy and delight of that precious book, and the unsearchable treasures with which it had enriched her soul. She was never tired of the subject, never tired of conversing with me on the various portions of Scripture which I had brought before her, or which she had read for herself. I usually found the New Testament open either in her hands, or, when her paroxysms of pain were most violent, lying on a chair or table near her. The word of God seemed to be more than her necessary food to her ; she literally hungered and thirsted for it.

She was constantly visited by a medical man, but she seemed to obtain no relief. Indeed,

her disease appeared to baffle every effort of skill, even the nature or cause of it was for some time unknown. I took a personal friend of my own, a young surgeon, of whom I had justly formed a high opinion, to visit her, and left him with her. A few days afterwards, when I saw him again, he told me that he was scarcely able to give an opinion on the case. "Are you quite sure," he added, "that she is not pretending to suffer more than she really does. She is certainly in a weak and delicate state; but I am sadly afraid that she is deceiving us, and there is not much the matter with her." I could not believe this, and so I told him; for I felt convinced in my own mind that no one but a consummate hypocrite, and such I felt assured she was not, could have counterfeited the agonies I had witnessed. But others also had the same suspicion concerning her; and though I could not alter my own opinion, I was deeply grieved to hear their remarks, or to admit the possibility of such gross deception in one of whom I thought so highly. Soon after this she begged me to give her a ticket of admission into the Infirmary. She had waited, she told me, till her husband returned from Wales, to ask this, as she could

not leave her children alone in the house. My application on her behalf was gladly attended to, and she was admitted. I soon after visited her there, and she expressed in warm terms her gratitude for the kindness and the care she met with. She was much worse, and suffering still greater agonies, but uniformly cheerful; looking simply to Jesus Christ, and full of hope and faith in Him as her only Redeemer, and only Mediator. The reality of her sufferings was no longer doubted by the medical men who attended her; and the same young friend to whom I have already referred, afterwards told me, how truly he deplored his former suspicions. The complaint proved, I believe, to be an abscess in the socket of the hip-joint, and for some time no outward appearance, nor any description that she gave, could enable them to discover the seat of the disease; but he told me that her sufferings must have been almost past description; and that her patience and fortitude had been truly extraordinary. In her case there was no recovery. But the more the outward frame decayed, the more the inward spirit was renewed with heavenly life and strength. She died before I was again

enabled to see her. I was absent for a time ; and on my return, I learned that she had entered into her rest.

Gloriously had the words of the Psalmist been fulfilled in her, "The entrance of thy word giveth light," He who is the light of the world had brought her forth from the darkness in which he found her ; and under the effectual teaching of the Holy Spirit whom He had given her, she had learnt from His word to know and to love Him as her only Saviour. She had learnt to trust Him with her whole heart ; and had been thus enabled to realize in its fulness, His own wondrous promise,* "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Here I close for the present the record of some of the facts connected with my ministerial course. There are many subjects yet untouched, which I had intended to introduce in these pages, but I have already exceeded the limits which I had proposed to myself. They must be reserved, therefore, for another volume. I may here mention, that the book was written at the suggestion and request of

* John viii. 12.

a friend. He begged me to publish some of the incidents, which had come under my notice from the time of my entering upon the work of the ministry. He will see that his request has not been forgotten.

I think it as well to state here, as well as by the title of this volume, that the circumstances which I have narrated are all facts ; there is no fiction in the book. So far from embellishing them, I have left out many details which might have added to the interest of my narratives ; but I felt that such pruning was necessary. I fully subscribe to the truth of the maxim, that "*Le vrai n'est pas toujours le vraisemblable.*"

I trust that my experience may prove not only interesting, but useful, to some of my younger brethren in the Christian Ministry. Those especially, who may suppose that their vocation does not supply them with employment, may learn that so far from being an idle calling, it supplies work for the whole life, and it demands the devotedness of the whole man. A clergyman need never turn to secular pursuits for occupation, or to worldly circles for recreation. His own profession will provide both to him ; and he may, if he will,

find an absorbing interest in that, and in that alone. If such is not the case, he can never be either a useful or a happy man in the ministry. A clergyman's calling has, however this disadvantage, necessarily attending it, that while in no other profession idleness is tolerated, or can obtain bread to support itself, a clergyman may, if he please, be an idler, or a trifler, doing the least possible work as a mere hireling; but how tremendous, notwithstanding, is the responsibility of his office! how awful the account he will have to render at the great day!

It was with no little pain that I heard the reply of a young clergyman when asked, on coming to take the charge of immortal souls in a curacy, Whether he found the place dull? "No," he said, "I am fond of music, and I have my flute; and, what with that, and my daily walk, I get through the day pretty well; besides, I dine out very often." I afterwards heard, that he was often at parties four days out of the six. Ah, what a contrast does the life of such an amiable trifler. present to that of him, who comes home every evening pale and exhausted from the arduous labours of the day, yet rejoicing to spend and be spent in the

holy and happy service of his blessed Master! I shall never forget how deeply and keenly I felt the observation, made to me by a godly man in the humbler ranks of life many years ago. "It is an awful thing, Sir, for an unconverted man to take upon himself to preach the gospel to immortal souls!" I have often heard the remark since; there is nothing new in it; but it was then new to me. Could I do otherwise than ask myself this searching question—"Am I a converted man; for I too have taken upon myself the commission of preaching the gospel to immortal souls?"

We must, if we preach Christ crucified, be either "the savour of death unto death, *or* the savour of life unto life," to our hearers; is it not possible that we may be "the savour of death unto death," not only to others, but to ourselves?

THE END.



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